Cahiers du MONDE RUSSE

Cahiers du monde russe
Russie - Empire russe - Union soviétique et États indépendants

47/1-2 | 2006
Repenser le Dégel

Picasso in thaw culture

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OpenEdition Journals

Édition électronique
URL : http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/9592
DOI : 10.4000/monderusse.9592
ISSN : 1777-5388

Éditeur
Éditions de l'EHESS

Édition imprimée
Date de publication : 1 juin 2006
Pagination : 65-108
ISBN : 2-7132-2096-3
ISSN : 1252-6576

Référence électronique
ELEONORY GILBURD, « Picasso in thaw culture », *Cahiers du monde russe* [En ligne], 47/1-2 | 2006, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2006, Consulté le 01 mai 2019. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/9592 ; DOI : 10.4000/monderusse.9592

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PICASSO IN THAW CULTURE*

The year 1956 began with the 20th Party Congress and ended with the Picasso exhibition. The two events not only marked the year's chronological boundaries but also defined how it would be remembered and depicted. To convey the most immediate sensations of 1956, memoirists recreate its sounds; the two events become meaningful by being made audible. The essence of the Congress was speaking: it was a time when stories were told and intense questions were asked; when the Word broke free.[1] But experiencing the 20th Party Congress was also marked by silence. "The Congress listened to me in such silence that a fly could be heard," recalled Nikita Khrushchev; "I can't remember such silence in all of my life," wrote Mikhail German, a student then and an art historian in the future.[2]

By contrast, all accounts of the Picasso exhibition draw on the language of clamor and commotion: large crowds break through museum gates; people speak loudly and agitatedly; outlandish young men defend modernism passionately, while equally earnest guardians of socialist realism try to shout them down. In the

* Various parts of this research were presented at the University of Chicago Russian Studies Workshop, the University of Toronto conference "What Was Real Socialism," the Oxford Brookes University conference "1956: Political Change in Art and Visual Culture," and the Berkeley Russian History *kruzhok*. I am grateful to the participants of these forums for interesting questions, to Alain Blum for encouragement, to Boris Iakovlevich Frezinskii for advice and archival access, and to Igor´ Naumovich Golomshtok for sharing his recollections. For careful readings and helpful suggestions, I thank Margaret Anderson, Charles Hachten, Elizabeth McGuire, Miriam Neirick, Larissa Zakharova, and the *Cahiers*' reviewers. Julia Gilburd, Denis Kozlov, and Yuri Slezkine saved me from many errors of grammar, fact, and judgment; I am in their debt. The research and writing of this article were supported by fellowships from the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, the Social Science Research Council (IDRF Program), the Graduate Division and the Chancellor's Office at the University of California, Berkeley, the Mabelle McLeod Lewis Memorial Fund, and the Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies.

1. *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul´te lichnosti Stalina na XX s´´ezde KPSS. Dokumenty* (M.: ROSSPEN, 2002), 288-290, 405-495, 497-517, 520-521, 526-572; Raisa Orlova, *Vospominaniia o neproshedshem vremeni* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1983), 192-194; David Samoilov, *Perebiraia nashi daty* (M.: Vagrius, 2000), 13.

2. Mikhail German, *Slozhnoe proshedshee (Passé composé)* (SPb.: Iskusstvo, 2000), 260; N. S. Khrushchev, *Vremia, liudi, vlast´. Vospominaniia* vol. 2 (M.: Moskovskie novosti, 1999), 186.

words of one such young man, "I would fasten to the arguing crowd, reach its center, and there, losing my voice and gesticulating violently, try to convince..."[3] And when words failed to convince, fists were set to the task: "What an event that was, the artist's fans and his defamers scuffled at the entrance to the Hermitage." At the Pushkin Museum, it was "so loud that the militia was called," but this did not prevent some young people from throwing out a particularly vociferous opponent of Picasso's work.[4] The day after seeing the exhibition, the writer Evgenii Shvartz noted in his diary: "The exhibit has stirred up extraordinary noise in the city. Brawls almost broke out by the paintings."[5]

The 1956 Picasso exhibition has acquired an epic significance in the memoirs of underground artists, political dissidents, and ordinary people who came of age during the Thaw. In memoirs it serves as a milestone ("[it] has caused an explosion in me"; "it was like a revelation for us, such as we haven't seen [...] for us, everything was 'ah!'") or as a shorthand notation for the age itself ("suddenly, the Picasso exhibition was opened"; "and so, it was the year 1956").[6] The exhibition was a dramatic experience for many young artists, who would shortly place themselves on the margins of, or altogether outside, "official art." This does not mean that they accepted Picasso, but they responded to him, and thus incorporated his challenge into their world. In art catalogues and recollections produced decades later, the 1956 exhibition opens the life stories of people as different as Valentin Samarin, whose encounter with Picasso began as an act of political speech in Leningrad and ended as modernist photography in Paris; Siberian painter Aleksandr Panteleev, for whom the exhibition amounted to an aesthetic crisis, but who never abandoned his aspirations to realist painting; and Leonid Talochkin who, in the 1950s, quit engineering for various odd jobs so that he could focus on collecting artworks — gifts from friends and cheap buys, the future exposition "Another Art." Nearly half a century later, the 1956 exhibition continued to launch artistic careers in Russia. At least, that is how Aleksandr Vinogradov and Vladimir Dubosarsky started their collaborative work and captured the spotlight in 1994 — by deconstructing the 1956 exhibition in an attempt to unravel "the myth of Picasso." Their exposition "Picasso in Moscow" counterpoised the replicas of the artist's own drawings and his ostensibly socialist realist portrait, created by Vinogradov and Dubosarskii. In the portrait, Picasso the Soviet everyman, stands,

3. Viktor Slavkin, *Pamiatnik neizvestnomu stiliage* (M.: Artist, Rezhisser, Teatr, 1996), 51; Nikolai Vladimirovich Eremchenko interview recording, 13/03/03, tape no. 5, Tsentral´nyi arkhiv audiovizual´nykh dokumentov Moskvy [hereafter TsAADM].

4. German, 395; I. G. Erenburg [Ilya Ehrenburg], "Liudi, gody, zhizn´," [hereafter *LGZh*] book 1 in *Sobranie sochinenii* [hereafter *Ss*] vol. 6 (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1996), 552; ibid., vol. 8 (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 2000), 462; idem, *Na tsokole istorii… Pis'ma, 1931-1967* (M.: Agraf, 2004), 416.

5. Evgenii Shvarts, *Zhivu bespokoino... Iz dnevnikov* (L.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1990), 635.

6. Viktor Pivovarov, *Serye tetradi* (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), 24; Slavkin, 51; Dmitrii Bobyshev, *Ia zdes´ (Chelovekotekst)* (M.: Vagrius, 2003), 135; Eremchenko interview recording.

with doves at his feet, against the background of the Kremlin and is thus integrated into the center of the Soviet capital.[7]

The Picasso exhibition as a signpost of the times, an item on the list of post-Stalinist changes, is present in many historical works on the 1950s.[8] But the very fact of this exhibition and its domestication among Soviet audiences is usually taken for granted. Some scholars in passing ascribe the exhibition to Picasso's membership in the French Communist Party (he "seemed 'safe' to the authorities").[9] There was nothing natural about the exhibition, however: in the 1950s, as always, Picasso was very inconvenient and unsafe — especially because of his party membership. Moreover, like all other modernist artworks exhibited in the Soviet Union between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s, Picasso's paintings were met with much hostility. Yet, unlike any other Western artist, Picasso traversed the path from nearly complete and abusive rejection in the late 1940s, through lukewarm and cautiously appreciative reception in the mid-1950s, to the official pantheon of great artists instantly recognizable among broad audiences. By the time of his second exhibition in 1966, Picasso was not only an ubiquitous if enigmatic presence, as in 1956, but a familiar one as well: his name and the titles of his paintings reappeared in articles, poems, lengthy memoirs and short stories, in the most popular and widely read periodicals. Today, Picasso is a household name, glittering in Moscow kiosks, on the covers of detective novels set in contemporary Russia and about Russians but with plots revolving around his paintings.[10]

This article analyzes how Picasso became a familiar presence among Soviet audiences — more generally, how certain foreign names, images, and cultural

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7. Valerii Val´ran, *Leningradskii andergraund: Zhivopis´, fotografiia, rok-muzyka* (SPb.: Izd-vo im N. I. Novikova, 2003), 58; I. B. Balashova, "Aleksandr Vasil´evich Panteleev i frantsuzskaia kul´tura," in *Frantsuzskaia kul´tura v russkoi provintsii (Vologodskii krai). Materialy chtenii* (Vologda: Vologodskaia oblastnaia universal´naia nauchnaia biblioteka im. I. V. Babushkina, 2000), http://www.booksite.ru/fulltext/fra/nts/uzs/kaya/index.htm; Ekaterina Viazova, "Aleksandr Vinogradov, Vladimir Dubossarskii. 'Pikasso v Moskve,'" *Khudozhestvennyi zhurnal* 5 (1994): 70; Vadim Alekseev, "Pamiati pokoleniia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (15 May 2002). On the exhibition's importance for aesthetic coming-of-age, see: Aleksandr Glezer, *Russkie khudozhniki na zapade: Esse i stat´i/Russian Artists in the West: Essays and Articles* (P. & New York: Tret´ia volna, 1986), 27, 146; Igor Golomshtok and Alexandr Glezer, *Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), 89; Vladimir Slepian, "The Young vs. the Old," *Problems of Communism* xi, 3 (May-June 1962): 56-57; *"Drugoe iskusstvo": Moskva, 1956-76* vol. 1 (M.: Interbuk, 1991), 35, 70; Natal´ia Shmel´kova, *Vo chreve machekhi, ili zhizn´ — diktatura krasnogo* (SPb: Limbus Press, 1999), 267.

8. E. g. Maria R. Zezina, *Sovetskaia khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia i vlast´ v 1950-e — 60-e gody* (M.: Dialog MGU, 1999), 239; David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 585-586; G. M. Torunova, "Mifologiia shestidesiatnikov," in *Literatura "tret´ei volny": Sbornik nauchnykh statei* (Samara: Samarskii universitet, 1997), 24.

9. Michael Scammell, "Art as Politics and Politics as Art," in Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge, eds., *Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience, 1956-1986* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 50; Nonna Stepanian, *Iskusstvo Rossii XX veka. Vzgliad iz 90-x* (M.: EKSMO-Press, 1999), 205.

10. Viktoriia Vetrova, *Pikasso* (M.: AST, Golos-Press, 2003); Andrei Konstantinov, *Delo o kartine Pikasso* (M.: Izd-vo OLMA-Press & SPb.: Izdatel´skii dom 'Neva,' 2003).

phenomena found a place in Soviet society during the Thaw. Picasso was uniquely mediated for Soviet viewers. Some of the most respected cultural figures championed his cause: they organized exhibitions, wrote explanatory articles, and created a compelling image of the artist. These mediators — the writer Ilya Ehrenburg, the poet Pavel Antokol´skii, the filmmaker Sergei Iutkevich — shared a deep emotional attachment to "Europe" and a self-assigned mission to reintroduce its poems, songs, films, paintings, and sometimes just names to Soviet audiences. Cultural mediators did not straddle two worlds; they remained outsiders in Europe, but their lives — creative works, relationships, trips, private libraries, even knick-knacks, indeed, their lifestyles — embodied a profound belief in the cultural unity of the European continent. In Soviet Russia they were distinguished by their special knowledge: of European languages, poetry, art, cityscapes, and people. They belonged to the same cohort; their childhood or adolescence approximately coincided with the *fin-de-siècle*. They learned of Europe first through their education and then through frequent travels in the 1920s; as reflected in their memoirs, these trips proved unforgettable and formative for their self-perceptions and for the mediating role they came to play during the Thaw. The younger generation of cultural activists who promoted Picasso shared a similar missionary enthusiasm and often identified themselves, professionally and personally, with the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s. Importantly, many people who created a niche for Picasso were literary critics, writers and poets, rather than art critics. Moreover, several art critics who did write about Picasso had studied the relationship between word and image, literature and painting, or had engaged in both literary and art criticism. In the Soviet Union, Picasso was a literary phenomenon as much as a visual one.[11]

Ultimately, "Picasso" became a figure of speech, a key metaphor that migrated from viewers' comments and art critical pieces into futuristic reflections and poetry.[12] A political, although not necessarily aesthetic, statement of a generation, Picasso the name became a way to talk about the central concerns of the Thaw: the past and new beginnings, force and innocence, debate and creative freedom. By the late 1960s, the noise had died down, but the name and the connotations it had acquired since 1956 continued to shape viewers' expectations.

The making of an event

In 1956, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS, Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul´turnykh sviazei s zagranitsei) and its special "sector of the friends of French science and culture" suggested to the Central

11. In pre-revolutionary Russia, the texts on Picasso were authored primarily by writers and poets as well. They interpreted Picasso's paintings in terms of "literary analogies," by recalling Dostoevsky and Gogol´. [Anatoly Podoksik, *Picasso: The Artist's Works in Soviet Museums* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., & L.: Aurora Art Publishers, 1989), 108-121.]

12. On Picasso and futuristic reflections: V. Turbin, *Tovarishch vremia i tovarishch iskusstvo* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1961).

Committee an exhibition/jubilee celebration in honor of Picasso's 75th birthday. Picasso was not altogether fresh news in the Soviet Union. In the first post-Revolutionary years, Russian observers had written about Picasso astutely and thoughtfully, if not always sympathetically. Picasso's drawings — his gifts — had been on display in the 1920s, and throughout the first half of the 1930s, the plans for a large exhibition of French art in the Soviet Union had consistently included Picasso. Moreover, the Museum of Contemporary Western Art in Moscow was the home of one of best collections of his early work.[13] What made Picasso fresh news in the mid-1950s was his strange place in the Soviet politics of the late 1940s: on the one hand, a prominent member of the FCP, who generously devoted his time and money to Communist causes, and on the other hand, an artistic *persona non-grata* during the "internal decontamination" from foreign influences. In 1947, xenophobia was institutionalized in the newly founded Academy of Arts, and *Pravda*'s announcement of the Academy's purpose — to cleanse Soviet art and art criticism of "formalist belch" (*otryzhka formalizma*) — included Picasso as an aesthetic foe. The press was schizophrenic, as if reporting on two different people — Picasso the communist and Picasso the artist.[14] "Anti-cosmopolitanism" bequeathed these tensions to the 1956 exhibition planners.

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13. Anatolii Lunacharskii, "Putevye ocherki," in *Ob izobrazitel´nom iskusstve* vol. 1 (M.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1967), 324-327, 331, but also 178, 337, 353; on exhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s, see *Iz istorii khudozhestvennoi zhizni SSSR. Internatsional´nye sviazi v oblasti izobrazitel´nogo iskusstva, 1917-1940* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1987), 69-70, 75, 114, 127, 132-142, 196-197, 207-208, 256; Viacheslav Popov and Boris Frezinskii, *Il´ia Erenburg v 1932-1935 gody. Khronika zhizni i tvorchestva (v dokumentakh, pis´makh, vyskazyvaniiakh i soobshcheniiakh pressy, svidetel´stvakh sovremennikov)* vol. 3 (SPb.: Biblioteka Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk, 2001), 65, 115.

14. The best work on the late 1940s is Antoine Baudin, *Le réalisme socialiste soviétique de la période jdanovienne (1947-1953)* vol. 1, *Les arts plastiques et leurs institutions* (Bern: P. Lang, 1997); the phrase/concept "internal decontamination" is Baudin's, ibid., 40-43, 257-262, and "'Why is Soviet Painting Hidden from Us?' Zhdanov Art and Its International Relations and Fallout, 1947-53," in Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Socialist Realism Without Shores* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997). See also Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Pres, 1998), 278-281, 283-287. On the Academy of Arts: Baudin, *Les arts*, 53-61; Elena Kornetchuk, "Soviet Art Under Government Control: From the 1917 Revolution to Khrushchev's Thaw," in Rosenfeld and Dodge, *Nonconformist*, 42; Bown, 226-27. On the anti-Picasso campaign as part of a larger campaign: "K rastsvetu sovetskogo izobrazitel´nogo iskusstva!" *Pravda* (11 August 1947); Vladimir Kemenov, "Aspects of Two Cultures," *VOKS Bulletin* 52 (1947): 20-36; B. Ioganson, "Korni zla," *Iskusstvo* 2 (1948): 7-8, here 7; L. Reingardt, "Po tu storonu zdravogo smysla (Formalizm na sluzhbe reaktsii)," *Iskusstvo* 5 (1949): 77-87, here 84; V. N. Vakidin, *Stranitsy iz dnevnika* (M.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1991), 165-166, 169. On Picasso's involvement in Communist causes: Gertje R. Utley, *Picasso: The Communist Years* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000); Pierre Daix, *Picasso: Life and Art* (New York: Icon Editions, 1993), 277-283, 295-301, 304-310 [French edition: *Picasso créateur: la vie intime et l'œuvre* (Paris: Seuil, 1987)]; Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Au service du parti: Le parti communiste, les intellectuals et la culture (1944-1956)* (P.: Editions de Minuit, 1983), 301-328; Kirsten Hoving Keen, "Picasso's Communist Interlude: the Murals of 'War' and 'Peace'," *Burlington Magazine* 122, 928 (July 1980): 464-470; Pierre Cabanne, *Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times* (New York: Morrow, 1977), 364-67, 371-72, 400-410, 419-24, 440-41 [French edition: *Le siècle de Picasso* (P.: Denoël, 1975)]; Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* 3rd edition (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 352-354, 366-369, 372-373.

The "main friend" of French culture was the writer Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967), a representative of the Soviet Union abroad and the single most influential mediator of European culture at home. At the turn of the century, Ehrenburg had lived in Paris as a revolutionary student exile, a poet, an *habitué* of Montparnasse cafés, and a member of a circle of young modernist poets and artists, Picasso among them. During the 1930s and 1940s, he had traveled to Paris for long stretches of time as an international journalist, a novelist, and Stalin's informal cultural envoy. Ehrenburg's place in Thaw culture and his authority among the Soviet readers of the 1950s and 1960s cannot be overestimated. He wrote texts that gave the period its name; he identified its cultural dilemmas; and, in his memoirs, he restored to Soviet cultural knowledge dozens of names, personalities, artistic movements, and foreign places, which had been hitherto obliterated from the public domain. In turn, readers wrote to him for advice on every conceivable topic. For fifty years, Ehrenburg had spoken about Picasso — a precious part of his biography. He associated the artist with cultural cataclysms, abiding youthful idealism and curiosity, and nostalgia for the bohemian Paris of his own youth.[15] The Picasso exhibition was thus a deeply personal matter for him. He invested extraordinary efforts into the exhibition, appealing to the Central Committee, where his contact was Dmitrii Shepilov, an influential secretary, the editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Shepilov identified himself with the creative intelligentsia, and, according to his posthumous hagiographers, for a brief moment in the mid-1950s, the creative intelligentsia identified him as its benefactor in the party apparatus.[16] Ehrenburg's strategy worked: in September of 1956 the Central Committee passed the appropriate resolution.[17]

While Ehrenburg picked the right man, the time was not quite right. The idea of a Picasso exhibition was initially broached in 1954, and perhaps that would have been a more congenial year; even the President of the Academy of Arts Aleksandr Gerasimov was willing to accept Picasso in person.[18] Actually, 1956 was less propitious because in the intervening two years members of artistic unions had started talking about "creative freedom" (*svoboda tvorchestva*). In late 1953 and early 1954, several articles in professional art journals revealed that real socialist realism embraced different trends and techniques, even "forms, styles, and genres,"

15. Ehrenburg, *LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 397-401, 427-434, 458-461, 469, 478-495; B. Ia. Frezinskii, "Il´ia Erenburg i Pablo Pikasso," *Pamiatniki kul´tury: Novye otkrytiia. Ezhegodnik* (M.: Nauka, 1998), 67, 70, 72, 80.

16. *I primknuvshii k nim Shepilov. Pravda o cheloveke, uchenom, voine, politike* (M.: Zvonnitsa-MG, 1998), 17, 21, 24-28, 30-34, 88-89, 119-121, 190, 203-209; Leonid Mlechin, *Zheleznyi Shurik* (M.: EKSMO, IaUZA, 2004), 129-132.

17. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii [hereafter RGANI] f. 5, Apparat TsK KPSS, op. 36, d. 27, l. 80. For a description of Ehrenburg's strategies in dealing with Soviet cultural officials, see Joshua Rubenstein, *Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), *passim*, and 297-301 on Picasso.

18. RGANI f. 5, op. 17, d. 499, l. 93.

not to mention "creative initiative."[19] Party-mindedness (*partiinost´*) now, after Vladimir Pomerantsev's article "On Sincerity in Literature," meant "sincerity" in all creative pursuits. Art regained a lofty purpose: at professional forums behind closed doors, artists spoke in religious and ethical terms about their erstwhile betrayal of their high calling for the sake of political contingencies.[20] When the Arts Department of the Central Committee looked into these matters, it discovered "useless" landscapes, "naked women in vulgar poses," and scenes of miserable everyday life. As if this were not bad enough, the Central Committee made another alarming discovery: the art critical press, which was supposed to detect and correct ideological errors, turned a blind eye to "bourgeois influences" and "the resurgence of formalism."[21]

The most concerted effort to extend the borders of socialist realism took place in the beginning of 1956, at a closed meeting of the MOSKh (Moskovskaia organizatsiia Soiuza khudozhnikov RSFSR) party organization. There, one after another, artists stood up to challenge the concept of realism delimited by 19th century Russian genre painting and to defend impressionism. Since the mid-1930s, impressionism had been considered a major outpost of "formalism," and in the late 1940s, at the height of the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" and "kowtowing to the West," it had become Soviet art's wicked alter-ego, an "ism" that stood for all the unacceptable "isms." The anti-cosmopolitans struggled not so much against the impressionist painterly culture, but rather, against impressionism as the most lasting and obvious foreign presence in Russian art.[22] In an attempt to

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19. *Apparat TsK i kul´tura, 1953-1957. Dokumenty* (M.: ROSSPEN, 2001), 198; RGANI f. 5, op. 17, d. 499, l. 206-207, ibid., op. 36, d. 25, l. 77-78; the Cultural Department convened a meeting of newspaper editors to discuss the coverage of art in the press.

20. RGANI f. 5, op. 17, d. 543, l. 101-104; V. Pomerantsev, "Ob iskrennosti v literature," *Novyi mir* 12 (1953): 218-245. On the implications of "sincerity" for the art profession: Susan Emily Reid, "Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art: the Search for a Contemporary Realism, 1953-1963" (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 158-163, 166-169.

21. RGANI f. 5, op. 17, d. 498, l. 95-101; ibid., d. 544, l. 9-11 (both documents are reprinted in *Apparat TsK*, 258-261, 346-347); ibid., d. 499, l. 206-207; ibid., d. 534, l. 9-16; ibid., op. 36, d. 14, l. 104; ibid., d. 25, l. 77-78.

22. "Sumbur vmesto muzyki," *Pravda* (23 January 1936); also see Leonid Maksimenkov, *Sumbur vmesto muzyki: Stalinskaia kul´turnaia revoliutsiia, 1936-1938* (M.: Iuridicheskaia kniga, 1997), 223-231. On anti-impressionism: A. Zotov, "Bor´ba dvukh napravlenii v russkom iskusstve (konets XIX — nachalo XX veka)," *Iskusstvo* 3 (June-May, 1948): 81-91; idem, "Impressionizm kak reaktsionnoe napravlenie v burzhuaznom iskusstve," *Iskusstvo* 1 (January-February, 1949): 86-91; P. Sysoev, "Bor´ba za sotsialisticheskii realizm v sovetskom izobrazitel´nom iskusstve," *Iskusstvo* 1 (January-February 1949): 5-28; K. Sitnik, "Vydaiushchiisia russkii khudozhestvennyi kritik (k 125-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia V. V. Stasova)," *Iskusstvo* 1 (January-February, 1949): 71-85, here 79-82; A. Zotov, "Za preodolenie perezhitkov impressionizma," *Iskusstvo* 1 (January-February, 1950). On Francophobia as an important aspect of the anti-impressionism campaign, see Sergei Varshavskii, *Upadochnoe iskusstvo Zapada pered sudom russkikh khudozhnikov-realistov* (L. & M.: Iskusstvo, 1949), 4-7, 22-23, 36-47, 52-63, 66-86, 90, 95-109, 115-117. Although somewhat different, this argument is close to Baudin, *Les arts*, 32-34, 40-43, 257, and Jørg Guldberg, "Socialist Realism as Institutional Practice: Observations on the Interpretation of the Works of Art of the Stalin Period," in Hans Günther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 149-77, esp. 165-67. For another perspective, see Bown, 192-195, 282-283.

rethink, perhaps to overturn, the earlier practices, impressionism was debated with singular urgency in 1955-1956.[23] MOSKh went so far as to propose the reopening of the Museum of Contemporary Western Art, closed in 1948.[24] The polemic in the art press became especially divisive in the fall and winter of 1956, on the eve of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists. The discussions focused on the limits of realism: how and who should define it, and how much subjectivity, individuality, and diversity of technique should this concept allow.[25]

Although Picasso was rarely mentioned in these early meetings and debates, they are nonetheless important for understanding the environment in which the exhibition took place. They are also important for appreciating the predicament of the exhibition planners in the Central Committee. With all efforts devoted to making the First Artists' Congress run smoothly, the Picasso exhibition was especially inconvenient, portending yet more discussions, more provocative statements, more unwelcome comparisons. Therefore, the Central Committee's resolution mandated a short-notice opening of a "small" show, with drawings and prints from Soviet museums and private collections. The organizational effort was to be handled entirely by VOKS, while the Academy of Arts deliberately stayed away.[26] For the VOKS officials, on the other hand, the Academy's participation was crucial, as it would lend the exhibition cultural legitimacy.[27] Contrary to its own designs, VOKS became the main sponsor of the exhibition, and this meant that Picasso would be celebrated not so much for his art as for his politics. The Central Committee's strategy would determine the logistics of the exhibition and have important consequences for how viewers experienced the event — as commotion, confusion, and unconstrained speech. After the exhibition, in its annual report to the Ministry of Culture, the Pushkin Museum could do no better than excuse itself: "the Picasso exhibition was not planned."[28]

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23. On the rehabilitation of impressionism: Kornetchuk, 45-47; Reid, "Destalinization," 161-163, 200-204, 213-215; RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 47, l. 11, 40-41, 102-103.

24. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 25, l. 24-25; ibid., d. 48, l. 16; see also ibid., d. 47, l. 43, 65-66, 106.

25. For the immediate pre-Congress meeting between selected artists and the Cultural Department officials, see RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 47. Press discussions: L. Liulchanov, "O 'literaturnosti' v zhivopisi," *Tvorchestvo* 1 (1957): 11-12; "Vernyi put´," *Iskusstvo* 1 (1957): 3-7; D. T. Shepilov, "Za dal´neishii rastsvet sovetskogo khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva," *Iskusstvo* 1 (1957): 6-13; "Traditsii i novatorstvo (Tvorcheskaia diskussiia v Moskovskom soiuze sovetskikh khudozhnikov)," *Iskusstvo* 2 (1956): 17-22; A. Lebedev, "Slovo s preds´´ezdovskoi tribuny," *Iskusstvo* 6 (1956): 7-10; G. Manizer, "Mesto i rol´ siuzheta v kartine," *Iskusstvo* 7 (1956): 3-8; A. Kamenskii, "Nekotorye osobennosti siuzheta v zhivopisi," *Iskusstvo* 8 (1956): 20-27. For a detailed survey of the art press and the Congress proceedings, see Reid, "Destalinization," 161-169, 201-204, 213-237, 249-280.

26. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 27, l. 80; Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [hereafter GARF] f. 9576, Soiuz sovetskikh obshchestv druzhby i kul´turnoi sviazi s zarubezhnymi stranami, SSOD, op. 1, d. 1, t. 1, l. 36; ibid., op. 2, d. 7, l. 114; ibid., d. 67, l. 25.

27. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 27, l. 80-81.

28. Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo muzeia izobrazitel´nykh iskusstv im. A. S. Pushkina [hereafter AGMII] f. 5, Vystavki Gosudarstvennogo muzeia izobrazitel´nykh iskusstv, op. 1, d. 2025, l. 2; see also ibid., d. 2034.

The departure from the established procedures caught the museum curators unawares. They were used to working according to annual and quarterly plans drawn up well in advance to allow for the preparation of consultants, catalogues, posters, and press announcements.[29] But in this case, no experts were trained to explain the artworks correctly; no posters announced the opening of the exhibition; no catalogues or guidebooks were printed; and Picasso did not become the topic of a learned conversation of the Museum's "academic council."[30] By the time the paintings reached Leningrad, the administration of the Hermitage had had several weeks to prepare the labels and explications, as well as to train tour guides and consultants who were posted in the exhibition rooms to answer viewers' questions. But again, everything was makeshift, and the Museum's Department of West European Art noted "significant difficulties" and the overall "frantic tempo."[31] Many viewers, both in Moscow and Leningrad, were "indignant at the absence of a consultant at this exhibition, where he [was] especially necessary."[32]

If VOKS did not quite get its wish, neither did the Central Committee; first, precisely because the provisions for a low-profile event left viewers to their own interpretive devices, and secondly, because Picasso did not share the Central Committee's plans. He would have none of "the careful, roundabout conversations" through which the exhibition had been negotiated in 1954, of Soviet officialese, of inauspicious openings and decorous procedures.[33] Instead, he hoped for a chronologically and stylistically representative exhibition — so much so that he handpicked from his personal collection 25 paintings conveying the diversity of his approaches and interests. Each stylistic milestone was to be exemplified by an artwork, ranging from the strictly realist portraits of his mother, his first wife Olga, and his son Paulo as Harlequin and Pierrot to the early 1950s paintings and prints of his children Claude and Paloma, with distorted bodies and overblown faces. The early 1920s were also represented by a massive, sculpturesque *Maternity*. *Seated Woman with a Book* and *Musical Instruments* complemented the Cubist paintings that the Soviet museums already had. The 1930s were to begin with the merry, colorful *Still Life on a Pedestal Table* and to end with the ferocious *Cat and Bird*; along the way, there would be several multi-view paintings of Marie-Thérèse — a poised *Woman with a Book* and *Woman with Blond Hair*, her facial features dislocated. From the 1940s, Picasso selected a *Vert-Galant* landscape and the

29. AGMII f. 5, op 1.

30. AGMII f. 5, op. 1, d. 2025, l. 2, 98, 119-20, *passim*.

31. Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha [hereafter AGE] f. 1, Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, op. 11, d. 760, l. 76-77, 80, 161, 169; ibid., d. 775, l. 26. (I am grateful to Denis Kozlov for providing these archival materials.)

32. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 7-8, 21 (quotation); Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva [hereafter RGALI] f. 1204, Erenburg Il´ia Grigor´evich, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 5, 9; AGE f. 1, op. 11, d. 815, l. 45.

33. Zhorzh Marten and Vol´f Sedykh, *Moskva-Parizh: Velenie serdtsa i razuma* (M.: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1998), 67; Vladimir Erofeev, *Diplomat: Kniga vospominanii* (M.: Zebra E, 2005), 320-326.

lithograph of *Françoise with Wavy Hair*. While he included a picture of Hélène Parmelin, he also appears to have kept his audience in mind and did not forget more palatable images: preparatory sketches for *Man with a Lamb* and two drawings of doves.[34] To the chagrin of Soviet officials, before they had a chance to object or dissuade him, Picasso sent the paintings, drawings, and ceramics, altogether 38 artworks, to the Soviet embassy in Paris, where they lay waiting to be shipped.[35] To return them would have been an unthinkable affront to Western leftist intellectuals and an imprudent one at that, given the crisis-ridden situation in Western Communist parties after the 20th Party Congress.[36] The artworks were accepted.[37] Soviet curators supplemented the show with their own resources, the pre-revolutionary collections of Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov.[38] At the Hermitage, for example, to demonstrate "particularly the early, realist phase," the exhibition was augmented with the tragic and lonely personages of the blue period: *The Absinthe Drinker*, *The Two Sisters*, *Woman with a Scarf*, *Portrait of Soler the Tailor*, and *Portrait of Jamie Sabartés*. But the curators of the West European Art department, scholars and enthusiasts who had spent most of their lives in the museum and remembered the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, also wished for a wide-ranging exhibition. They presented Cubist guitars, violins, clarinets, and pears, as well as *Woman with a Fan*, *Dance of the Veils*, and *Three Women*. Many years later, one of the curators recalled, "You had to see it, how there was nothing, and then [the paintings] returned."[39]

Foreign paintings and Soviet viewers

When the paintings returned in the mid-1950s and early 1960s, contemplative museum experience was temporarily abandoned for expressive gesticulation and articulation. Museums, and foreign exhibitions in particular, were places of sociability and high-flowing romance. Teenage girls day-dreamed in front of

34. AGE f. 1, op. 11, d. 775, l. 27-28.

35. RGANI f. 5, op. 30, d. 172, l. 170; ibid., op. 36, d. 27, l. 80.

36. On the reaction to the "Secret Speech" among French Communists and sympathizers, see *Doklad*, 723-724.

37. Ehrenburg, *Na tsokole*, 408-409; RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 27, l. 82.

38. M. Gukovskii, "Vremennye vystavki khudozhestvennykh proizvedenii iz stran zapadnoi Evropy v 1956 g.," *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* XIII (L.: Iskusstvo, 1958), 15; on Picasso in the Shchukin and Morozov collections, see Al´bert Kostenevich, "Russkie sobirateli frantsuzskoi zhivopisi," in *Morozov i Shchukin — russkie kollektsionery. Ot Mone do Pikasso* (Keln: Diumon, 1993), 76-83, 119-121.

39. AGE f. 1, op. 11, d. 775, l. 27; on curators and enthusiasts, see Kostenevich, 137n172; Elena Kumpan, "Vspominaia Lidiiu Iakovlevnu," *Zvezda* 3 (2002): 135-167, here 138; Saint Petersburg television interview with L. A. Dukel´skaia, ASB-6, tape 149 (I thank Petr Bagrov for making the transcript of the interview available to me). As each museum drew primarily on its own collection, the Pushkin exhibition was smaller and included *Young Acrobat on a Ball*, *Family of Saltimbanques*, *Head of an Old Man in Tiara*, *Still Life with Violin*, *Bowl of Fruit with Bunch of Grapes and Sliced Pear*. [Podoksik, 179.]

Monet and Renoir; young men impressed their girlfriends with interpretive flair; and friends carried on discussions about aesthetic criteria, life and art, their country's past and future in showrooms and hallways, causing traffic jams as well as those wars of wits for which foreign exhibitions were notorious.[40] Foreign art exhibitions were a *happening*. There, like-minded people met, and some of the decade's rhetorical battles — most prominently, "the conflict of generations" — acquired human voices, which turned hoarse in quarrels. Museum guides tried shouting down the crowds but to no avail: "It was next to impossible," complained one report to the Ministry of Culture,

> to explain this or that aesthetic phenomenon in the showrooms, in the middle of a crowd of viewers arguing loudly among themselves. The voice of the consultant would be drowned out by hundreds of other voices, and the guide would have no choice but to abandon her lecture and join in the argument.[41]

Much of this commotion has been preserved in viewers' comments. One of the main sources of viewer responses is the comment book — an interactive text and an artifact of collective activity, configured sequentially, with a contextual framework for entries (where the context is everything previously written). The public nature of writing and the attendant possibility of surveillance have prompted some scholars to approach the comment book as little more than posturing and performance.[42] This approach is of limited use given the different conditions under which viewers wrote comments: the comment book was not always available in the showrooms for public readings, and, in the early 1960s, some museums replaced the bound comment book with inconspicuous loose sheets to be dropped in a sealed ballot box. Under different circumstances of writing — whether the comment book was read in public or not; whether viewers had read previous comments or not — people produced similar comments. The performance approach, moreover, tends to reduce polysemantic speech to pro and con opinions, conditioned by political and class divisions.[43] Yet, it is the vocabulary, metaphors, repetitions, logic of the

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40. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2616, l. 4ob, 130; ibid., d. 2617, l. 10-12ob; ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1326, l. 48; ibid., d. 513, l. 11.

41. RGALI f. 2458, Direktsiia khudozhestvennykh vystavok i panoram Ministerstva kul´tury SSSR, op. 2, d. 1326, l. 25-26.

42. Susan E. Reid, "The Exhibition *Art of Socialist Countries*, Moscow 1958-9, and the Contemporary Style of Painting," in Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2000), 117; idem, "In the Name of the People: The Manège Affair Revisited," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, 4(fall 2005): 673-716, esp. 680-683. For a description of the comment book as a material artifact, see Reid, "In the Name," 679-680; for a discussion of contextual frameworks, see Moira Smith, "Walls Have Ears: A Contextual Approach to Graffiti," *International Folklore Review*, 4 (1986): 100-105.

43. Reid, "The Exhibition," 118-119; idem, "In the Name," 692, 701, 703-704. I would argue that conservative aesthetic preferences cannot be equated with an anti-reformist political stance. In the case of Picasso, an example illustrates the point: In 1966, Vladimir Dudintsev, whose novel *Not By Bread Alone* had been a banner of reformism ten years earlier, attacked Picasso from a conservative aesthetic standpoint in an article with a thesis and title strangely

argument, personal stories, and omissions that are the most valuable aspects of the comments; even offensive language offers an entryway into the fears of a society that produces it.[44]

Viewers often expected foreign artworks to "narrate in simple words" the story of another nation's life, that is, to provide ethnographic knowledge "about everyday life (*byt*)," "external appearance, [...] character," "about the life of the people, about [their] feelings, about nature."[45] This expectation was grounded in the assumption that another culture was readily accessible as long as narrative devices allow for intelligible reading. This was the meaning of the cliché that "true art" is a universal language, requiring neither translation nor an explanation. Hence, becoming "familiar" and "acquainted" was central to the museum experience. Exhibitions earned visitors' praise for "giv[ing] a full idea" about another culture, "wonderfully open[ing] [it] up," for being "informative." And to be informative, the paintings had to be accessible as well as "memorable," another term of commendation.[46]

However, the first reaction was surprise because what viewers saw was vastly different from what they had expected. The common denominator of everybody's knowledge about contemporary Western art was the invective rhetoric in Soviet newspapers. Reading conditioned the viewing experience by setting expectations, to be fulfilled or disappointed. "What we have only read about earlier, now, after seeing the exhibition, has become clear," was one way to appropriate the powers of judgment without relinquishing the customary framework of newspaper analysis.

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reminiscent of the 1940s anti-Western and anti-modernist campaigns. [See Kemenov, "Aspects," and V. Dudintsev, "Dve magii iskusstva," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (13 August 1966); see, in response, Iurii Trifonov, "O neterpimosti," in *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia…* (M.: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1985).] For a similar argument on the incongruence of conservatism and "Stalinism," see Denis Kozlov, "'I Have Not Read, but I Will Say': Soviet Literary Audiences and the Changing Ideas of Social Membership, 1958-1966," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, 3 (summer 2006): 557-597.

44. See David Garrioch, "Verbal Insults in Eighteenth-century Paris," in Peter Burke and Roy Porter, eds., *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

45. This discussion is based on viewer comments from the following exhibitions: French Art, XV-XX centuries (1955); Mexican graphics (1955); French 19th century Painting (1956); British Art (1956); "Looking at People": Eight Contemporary English Artists (1957); Contemporary Italian Graphics and Drawings (1957); International Exhibition of Fine and Applied Arts, VI International Festival of Youth and Students (1957); Albert Marquet (1958); Contemporary Graphics from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico (1958); British Painting (1960); The Art of Mexico (1960); French Art (1961); Renato Guttuso (1961); Fernand Léger (1962-63); French Art from the Hermitage (1964). I discuss these exhibitions, as well as other themes from the comments, in " 'To See Paris and Die': Foreign Culture in the Soviet Union, 1955-68" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, forthcoming), ch. 3, "Through the Looking-glass of Socialist Realism." AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 269, l. 20, 21ob, 23, 24 (quotation), 26ob, 28ob; ibid., d. 224, l. 1; ibid., d. 260, l. 54-54ob; RGALI f. 2329, Ministerstvo kul´tury SSSR, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 30 (quotation); ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 521, l. 91-92; ibid., d. 1339, l. 12, 44, 45 (quotation), 46 (quotation), 53; ibid., d. 1336, l. 1; ibid., d. 1337, l. 4; ibid., d. 1273, l. 3, 10.

46. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 237, l. 3ob, 5, 7-7ob, 8ob; ibid., d. 269, l. 15, 22ob, 23, 26ob, 33ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 22, 32ob; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 2 (quotation), 16 (quotation), 82; ibid., d. 1344, l. 54 (quotation), 58 (quotation).

"For us it is a newly discovered world. Our eyes have been opened," others commented on their experiences of seeing versus reading about foreign art.[47] Indeed, in the 1950s, references to recovering eyesight, to clarity, to the revealed and the hidden were widespread in responses that otherwise registered radically divergent aesthetic preferences. Comments drew on and disavowed the language of secrecy, with its hiding devices — locks, walls, curtains, screens. In the familiar Soviet dichotomy of light and darkness, the people had been held in darkness once again. The origins of darkness were traced to 1934, 1936-37, 1941, or 1947-48 — the Stalin years. In the words of a party member at the 1955 exhibition of French art, "for twenty years," since 1935,

> [this] has been kept secret, but the radiance of real art will break through all obstacles, all screens, all walls, all curtains. And it becomes clear that it is **impossible to hide** such treasures […] and to seal up again in the darkness of the archives what belongs to the people. Thus taught the great Lenin.[48]

Suspicion continued to grow: "The works of the Cubists are kept hidden"; "We hide our treasures and keep them in the storerooms"; "Why has the Museum of Contemporary Western Art (on Kropotkin Street) been hermetically shut since 1941? Strange!"[49]

Older viewers had yet older memories. What emerged from the dim images preserved since the 1920s, since the times of futurism, constructivism, and the Museum of Contemporary Western Art, were the names. During the first foreign art exhibitions, compiling the lists of artists was particularly important; comment books are packed with names underlined, capitalized, bolded for emphasis, and strung together in meaningful sequences: "Renoir, Matisse, Rodin, Manet, Gauguin," "Picasso, Renoir, Cézanne," "Renoir, Monet, Picasso."[50] There was pleasure in *recognition* itself; viewers relished the artists' names and presented the museum experience as a rendezvous with long-lost and suddenly recovered friends — "old acquaintances and beloved artists."[51] Such memories challenge the art-critical assumption that in the 1950s viewers rejected modernism because they had never seen it.[52] Some not only remembered but also cited the art of the 1920s as

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47. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 82, 97 (quotation); ibid., d. 1339, l. 46, 146 (quotation); ibid., d. 1341, l. 160, 167; ibid., d. 1344, l. 30, 32, 52; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 269, l. 25ob, non-paginated between l. 30ob and 31; ibid., d. 278, l. 29ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 62, 105.

48. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 216, l. 12, 14-14ob, 19ob, 20ob, 37-37ob, 38ob-39 (quotation, emphasis in the original); on darkness, see ibid, d. 239, new pagination l. 5.

49. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 239, l. 4 (quotation), new pagination 6, 9-9ob; ibid., d. 216, l. 1, 2, 4, 8, 10ob (quotation), 12, 14, 19ob-20ob, 21, 34, 35, 37-37ob (quotation); ibid., d. 219, l. 15, 21; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1344, l. 54; on memories or second-hand memories of the Museum of Contemporary Art, see also RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1364, l. 9, 11.

50. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 216, l. 1, 2ob, 4, 7, 8, 14ob, 15, 20ob, 27; ibid., d. 219, l. 2; ibid., d. 239, l. 4; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 522, l. 8ob; ibid., d. 1364, l. 2ob.

51. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 216, l. 4.

52. Reid, "The Exhibition," 117; *idem*, "In the Name," 690, 708.

further proof of the superiority, and decisive triumph, of realism. "We also had this in the 1920s, but it went away quickly since this [was] not art but quackery." These viewers called for brochures to be published about "the epoch of our 1920s — that is, the epoch of 'futurism,' 'cubism,' 'VKhUTEMAS,' 'Proletkul´t,' 'MOPP,' [sic] 'RAPP' and so on and so forth." Such publications would demonstrate that modernism "for us is already a thing of the past (and thank God!!!)." Contemporary European art was a hostage of Russian modernism.[53]

People did not come to foreign art exhibitions empty-handed, and newspapers were not their only sources of knowledge. They came with cultural memories, with names, facts, and stories they read in old and new books,[54] and with the Soviet aesthetic education that put a premium on "Great Masterpieces." Viewers took pride in their knowledge of the names of old masters and the titles of old paintings. It was at once their personal accomplishment and the feat of the whole country, analogous to being able to recite Pushkin by heart, boasting Zola's collected works in one's home library, playing the Oginski Polonaise on the piano. Some names were Russian — Surikov, Repin, Shishkin, Serov; others — Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, Rubens, and Rafael — became Russian as a consequence of the Soviet Union's custodianship over the European classical heritage.[55] The Renaissance cult of Man found a hospitable home in the Soviet Union, merging with Russian revolutionary Prometheanism. Soviet faith in human invincibility met the Renaissance anthropocentrism, minus its individualism but not without its cult of Great Men. The Soviet Union laid singular claims to the Renaissance heritage, particularly following World War II, when the Russians presumed that they had saved European civilization from barbarity. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Soviet historians, art critics, and artists waged a holy war "in defense of the Renaissance"; it was not a matter of "a narrow academic question" but "of central importance for [...] our growing socialist culture."[56] The Renaissance was the highest stage of realism and Great Masterpieces were the standard for measuring human achievement.

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53. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 48 (quotation), 50, 77; ibid., d. 1339, l. 145 (quotation); ibid., d. 1341, l. 162, 167, 181, 189; ibid., d. 1344, l. 45, 49, 74; ibid., d. 1359, l. 1; see also AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 227, l. 17ob-18, 34ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 99. VKhUTEMAS — Vysshie khudozhestvenno-tekhnicheskie masterskie, Proletkul´t — Proletarskaia kul´tura, MAPP — Moskovskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei, RAPP — Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei.

54. For some examples of the books: RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2608, l. 126ob; ibid., d. 2614, l. 61; ibid., d. 2615, l. 114; ibid., d. 2616, l. 89; ibid., d. 2617, l. 79; ibid., d. 2645, l. 95.

55. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 521, l. 21; ibid., d. 1336, l. 7, 15, 61, 113; ibid., d. 1341, l. 70; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 219, l. 11ob, 16; ibid., d. 227, l. 8ob, 13, 20, 31ob.

56. Programmatic statements: V. N. Lazarev, "Protiv fal´sifikatsii istorii kul´tury Vozrozhdeniia," M. V. Alpatov, "V zashchitu Vozrozhdeniia (Protiv teorii burzhuaznogo iskusstvoznaniia)," and V. S. Kemenov, "Protiv reaktsionnogo burzhuaznogo iskusstva i iskusstvoznaniia," in I. E. Grabar´ and V. S. Kemenov, eds. *Protiv burzhuaznogo iskusstva i iskusstvoznaniia. Sbornik statei* (M.: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1951), esp 5-7. For specialized studies, see M. V. Alpatov, *Vseobshchaia istoriia iskusstv* vol. 2 (M. & L.: Iskusstvo, 1949); V. N. Lazarev, *Leonardo da Vinchi* (M.: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1952). On the politics of Renaissance scholarship and "the battle for the Renaissance" during the Thaw, see M. A. Gukovskii,

In viewers' comments throughout the 1950s, the Renaissance remained the aesthetic ideal. This is what they meant when they wrote about beauty and pleasure, about an art that enraptures. Accessibility alone was not what most viewers demanded in painting; they shared a common understanding of aesthetic experience as elation, emotional trance, ennoblement of feelings, and, ultimately, harmony.[57] If the Renaissance stood for the Golden Age, then the "Stone Age" represented the idea of the cultural decline of the West. The notion of Western "barbarity" (*varvarstvo*, *dikost´*) was readily available since the war, when it received wide currency. Viewers reserved the harshest criticism for Western artists, whom they held responsible for "the rape of civilization," as one respondent put it, for the destruction of culture — culture as it was understood in the Soviet Union.[58] In light of the Renaissance, contemporary Italian paintings and prints at the Youth Festival and Italian Graphics exhibitions (1957) were especially shocking; it was "scary to think that Italian artists [were] capable of such splatter, which shows the degradation of art. How can this possibly be compared to the past? Italy, whose name is linked to magnificent and unsurpassed examples of visual art, has come to exhibiting such trash." "Dear Italy! The country of great masters! How have you come to this? Where is your true art?"[59]

Surprise was passing; incomprehension, bewilderment, and revulsion stayed with viewers beyond the museum gates. Descriptions of museum experiences at foreign exhibitions are remarkable for their sheer physicality. Looking at foreign paintings was not a contemplative activity; as the viewers' language of disgust bears witness, it was palpable and corporal.[60] They complained of severe headaches, nausea, depression, exhaustion, even fatigue, and rushed to leave exhibitions.[61] Sometimes people did not exactly know what was wrong with them; it was something that escaped definition, something between the physical and the

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"Rozhdenie i gibel´ ital´ianskogo Vozrozhdeniia (o novoi literature po voprosu o sushchnosti i khronologicheskikh ramkakh Vozrozhdeniia)," *Zapadnoevropeiskoe iskusstvo. Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* VIII (L. & M.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1964), 5-22, esp. 5-8. See also Baudin, *Les arts*, 260-61.

57. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 216, l. 19ob, 27; ibid., d. 224, l. 1ob; ibid., d. 227, l. 13, 24-24ob, 25, 26, 34; ibid., d. 260, l. 49ob, 51ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 101; RGALI f. 1204, op 2, d. 2616, l. 5ob-7ob; ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 71, 73, 75, 81, 111; ibid., d. 1344, l. 12, 42.

58. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 227, l. 6, 16ob, 19ob, ibid., d. 260, l. 48 (quotation), 49ob, 51-51ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 3; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 13, 27; ibid., d. 1337, l. 30, 37; ibid., d. 1341, l. 79; ibid., d. 1344, l. 50; ibid., d. 1339, l. 35; on the uses of "barbarity," see RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 5, 6, 43, 49, 106; ibid., d. 1339, l. 27; ibid., d. 1341, l. 75, 183; ibid., d. 1344, l. 45; ibid., d. 1359, l. 3.

59. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 224, l. 3-3ob (quotation); ibid., d. 260, l. 47-48, 51-51ob; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1341, l. 75 (quotation), 82, 84, 182; ibid., d. 1339, l. 23, 26, 27, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 45, 47, 52, 132, 141; ibid., d. 1336, l. 53, 61; ibid., d. 1337, l. 45, 52; ibid., d. 1344, l. 3, 23, 24, 29, 33, 35, 39, 40, 47, 56, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67; ibid., d. 1359, l. 4ob; ibid., f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 11.

60. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1339, l. 30, 34, 47, 48, 96, 140; ibid., d. 1336, l. 71, 103, 106, 112; ibid., d. 1341, l. 47, 48, 53, 80, 171, 179; ibid., d. 1344, l. 61; ibid., d. 1337, l. 29, 30.

61. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1337, l. 15, 36; ibid., d. 1339, l. 29, 134; ibid., d. 1341, l. 52, 54, 170; ibid., d. 1344, l. 22, 37; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 269, l. 30ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 26, 43ob.

emotional, it was "a feeling," "a grim, dejected feeling." The paintings gave no repose, not even after visitors had left them behind — the "vile impression[s]" were "indelible, ineradicable," and transfigured into nightmares.[62]

Viewers shifted the burden of their own malaise and confusion onto the artists. Time and again, artists were counseled to seek treatment for schizophrenia or mocked as mental asylum patients, and doctors bore witness: "As the head doctor of a mental hospital, I must note with regret that the art of my patients is not inferior to the best 'masterpieces' of West European artists. I would have been happy to admit them to my medical institution."[63] The Russian word *marazm*, which viewers frequently chose to describe the condition of Western art, implied both mental disorder and senility.[64] This line of reasoning — or, rather, abnegating reason — overlapped with the analysis of capitalist degeneration to confirm, by way of visual examples, the familiar dichotomy. The capitalist West was decrepit and decaying, practically on the verge of extinction; its art was decadence's last spasm and senility's last vision.[65] Its communist antipode was "youth" — the dominant image with which Soviet culture associated itself. Hence, there was all the more reason to worry about young people becoming contaminated by capitalism's final visions. Teachers were the one group of viewers who pushed medical metaphors to the ultimate conclusion: they wrote about a "virus," an "infection" enveloping their students. The debilitating effects were immediately evident, and teachers drew attention to some unidentified "young men" who propagandized abstract art and seemed to have stepped straight out of the satirical magazine *Krokodil*.[66]

Art historians explain such responses to Western modern art in light of Soviet viewers' life-long exposure to socialist realism — an observation made at the time by viewers themselves.[67] Indeed, abstractions seemed odd next to the familiar realist

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62. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1341, l. 42, 46, 52, 70, 80 (quotation), 155, 179, 182; ibid., d. 1339, l. 97, 131 (quotation); ibid., d. 1336, l. 3, 35, 76, 81, 101; ibid., d. 1337, l. 13, 33; ibid., d. 1344, l. 69; ibid., d. 1359, l. 6.

63. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 10, 11, 15, 20, 38, 48, 57 (quotation), 58, 72, 92, 100, 103, 106, 109, 114, 115; ibid., d. 1341, l. 43, 78, 84, 152, 162, 164, 174, 179; ibid., d. 1339, l. 28, 29, 32, 55, 95, 102, 130, 135, 136, 138 (quotation); ibid., d. 1359, l. 4ob, 12; ibid., d. 1344, l. 9, 14, 27, 41, 44, 65, 66, 72, 77, 80; ibid., d. 1337, l. 14, 17, 23, 31, 66; ibid., f. 2926, op. 2, d. 148, l. 25; ibid., f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 4ob, 8, 29.

64. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 260, l. 49ob, 50, 54ob; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 13, 89; ibid., d. 1341, l. 49, 152; ibid., d. 1339, l. 23, 47; ibid., d. 1344, l. 1; ibid., d. 1359, l. 5.

65. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 9, 21, 75, 94-95, 110; ibid., d. 1337, l. 6, 22, 24, 31; ibid., d. 1341, l. 161; ibid., d. 1344, l. 31, 35, 44, 57, 73.

66. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 269, non-paginated insert after l. 30ob; ibid., d. 278, l. 41; ibid., d. 306, l. 5; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 35-36, 41, 71, 85, 87, 95, 96, 115; ibid., d. 1337, l. 43; ibid., d. 1339, l. 35, 135, 137, 145, 146; ibid., d. 1341, l. 159, 179; ibid., d. 1344, l. 61, 71; for an example of teachers' responses in letters, rather than comment books, see ibid., f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2647, l. 144-45.

67. Reid, "In the Name," 687-88, 690, 708. For viewers' explanations, see: AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 224, l. 7; ibid., d. 227, l. 4, 6, 7, 14ob, 21, 22, 22ob, 30ob-31; ibid., d. 260, l. 50, 55; ibid., d. 278, l. 39ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 81ob, 100, 101, 102; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2603, l. 46-46ob; ibid., d. 2604, l. 186ob-187; ibid., d. 2616, l. 4ob-5, 129-29ob; ibid., d. 2643, l. 41-42ob; ibid., f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 1ob, 5, 15, 20, 23; ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 10, 23, 27, 33, 78,

paintings, but this language of condemnation was not too different from the usual tropes of anti-modernist discourse the world over. Daubs, drunkards, donkeys, and the mentally deranged were a staple of critiques of modernism, be it in New York, London, or Paris.[68] But why should canvases painted in far-away countries become a personal affront? Why the spirited arguments and vehement emotions?

Soviet aesthetic experience was more than a sum of individual viewers' impressions and opinions; it was about something greater. The arguments in comment books were not so much about the paintings on display as about a collective identity defined as having a "culture" and "being cultured."[69] Comment-writers used terms such as "uncultured," "having little culture" (*nekul´turnyi*, *malokul´turnyi*), "being truly cultured" (*po-nastoiashchemu kul´turnyi*), "the growth of our culture" (*povyshenie nashei kul´tury*) "narrow-mindedness," "crass ignorance," "taste" and "tastelessness," "banality" (*poshloe*).[70] These convey at once a sense of moral superiority and cultural insecurity: *poshlost´*, indeed, had assumed its pejorative meaning and its Russian specificity in 19th century literature precisely in the context of the Russian encounter with and imitation of Western fashions.[71] Pride and prejudice were at the heart of a similar encounter in the mid-20th century.[72] A central claim of socialist realism, in art as in life, was that the Revolution had released Culture from class fetters and made it available to the People; they were taught "true" and "high" Culture in schools, institutes, evening classes, lectures, and newspapers.

Foreign art exhibitions not only displayed something unfamiliar but also claimed for it an artistic value, thus casting doubt on Soviet viewers' cultural literacy. Viewers knew well what objects were worthy of museums, described in the Romantic idiom as "shrines" and "temples" of culture.[73] Since viewers could

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81, 106, 107, 117; ibid., d. 1337, l. 17, 26, 35, 42, 52, 61; ibid., d. 1339, l. 31, 37, 38, 44, 52, 54, 98, 146; ibid., d. 1341, l. 45, 146, 155, 185; ibid., d. 1344, l. 55, 80, 82, 64; ibid., d. 1359, l. 9-11, 13-13ob, 14-14ob, 18; ibid., d. 1364, l. 4, 7ob, 15ob-16, 16ob, 17.

68. E. g. on Picasso specifically: Daix, 279-280; Gijs van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (New York & London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 120, 122-23, 191-93.

69. On Sovietness and *kul´turnost´*: Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Privilege and Taste," in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

70. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 27, 31, 47, 48, 68, 91; ibid., d. 1337, l. 15, 18; ibid., d. 1341, l. 153, 179; ibid., d. 1339, l. 23, 138; ibid., d. 1344, l. 14, 33; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 227, l. 26, 27; ibid., d. 239, l. 2ob, 16ob, 18-18ob; ibid., d. 260, l. 50.

71. Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1994), 41-66.

72. RGALI f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 21; ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 513, l. 14, 23; ibid., d. 521, l. 99; ibid., d. 522, l. 26ob; ibid., d. 1336, l. 13, 26, 34, 78, 111; ibid., d. 1337, l. 13, 18, 42; ibid., d. 1339, l. 23, 28, 30; ibid., d. 1341, l. 42, 51, 52, 155, 156; ibid., d. 1344, l. 15, 25, 56, 74; ibid., d. 1359, l. 4, 15ob, 17ob; ibid., d. 1364, l. 9ob.

73. One the metaphor "Temple der Kunst," see Kenneth Hudson, *Museums of Influence* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 43-47; Stephen E. Weil, *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Inquiries into Museums and Their Prospects* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 3-17, esp. 7.

not anchor modern art in their definition of culture, they could not find a place for it in the museum.[74] They responded with surprise and incomprehension, but most surprising for them was their own incomprehension: "I look in surprise: I am a Soviet viewer, and it seems to me that I am not so stupid, but I could not understand many paintings, despite my wish to do so."[75] Such viewers sought to expose modernism and its defenders for a lack of culture — for being the proverbial emperor without clothes — before anybody had a chance to strip them of their own claim to culture.[76]

If modernist paintings had cultural value, as the government and the museum administration seemed to grant, then being cultured did not require Sovietness. The collapse of boundaries between meaning and senselessness, culture and barbarity, health and illness was almost a natural — and certainly a national — disaster, described with images of a powerful torrent that threatens to engulf Russia. Again and again comments convey the sense of crumbling certainties: "I am scared, could this wave sweep over us?"; "I am scared to call this art"; "I am frightened"; "I am offended and scared."[77] Most powerfully, meaning gaps were exposed not in abusive speech, which, after all, requires making sense even if by negation, but in silence, particularly striking when surrounded by all the noise. When making sense encountered overpowering obstacles, speech ceased, language stopped. "What can one say," viewers grasped for words but found nothing to say, and their language so often either descended into profanities or broke down into silence: "I have no words"; "no words, no words, no words."[78]

Viewers' use of medical language was a way to regain words, to reclaim mastery over meaning, to reaffirm their hold on "true" culture, and to draw the boundary between the familiar and the foreign. The boundary overlaid the cultural geography of Moscow. The Tret´iakov Gallery, one of the most frequent tropes in viewers' comments, functioned as an alternative center of culture and a symbolic counterpart to foreign exhibitions.[79] As a shrine of realism, the Tret´iakov Gallery encouraged

74. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 10, 79, 92; ibid., d. 1337, l. 34; ibid., d. 1341, l. 155; ibid., d. 1339, l. 26, 48, 51, 135, 137; ibid., d. 1359, l. 11ob; ibid., d. 1364, l. 14; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 227, l. 32; ibid., d. 239, l. 7ob; ibid., d. 260, l. 48; ibid., d. 278 , l. 35; ibid., d. 321, l. 14-14ob; ibid., d. 306, l. 12, 58, 66, 71, 74, 78-79.

75. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 51, 57 (quotation), 65, 92; ibid., d. 1341, l. 157.

76. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 4, 35, 42, 84, 111; ibid., d. 1337, l. 37; ibid., d. 1341, l. 156, 173; ibid., d. 1339, l. 49, 129, 135, 142; ibid., d. 1344, l. 9, 29, 46, 49; ibid., d. 1359, l. 11; f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 31.

77. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 48, 50, 76, 90, 101; ibid., d. 1339, l. 56; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 278, l. 39ob.

78. RGALI f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 12; ibid., f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 47, 51, 68, 88; ibid., d. 1337, l. 32, 36, 61; ibid., d. 1339, l. 56; ibid., d. 1344, l. 43; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 260, l. 47; ibid., d. 306, l. 42.

79. RGALI f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 9ob; ibid., d. 1336, l. 2, 3, 17, 26, 59, 76, 79, 85, 87, 109; ibid., d. 1337, l. 33, 36; ibid., d. 1339, l. 28, 46, 132; ibid., 1341, l. 172, 174, 175; ibid., 1344, l. 16, 22, 33, 43, 45, 50, 56.

viewers in their claims to good aesthetic judgment.[80] But it did more than demonstrate the superiority of realism. From the beginning, the Gallery's founder, Pavel Tret´iakov, intended it to be an attestation to the Russian national genius.[81] "Tret´iakovka" was a shelter from the absurd, chaotic, and threatening world of foreignness, a place where one could be both cultured and Russian. "Tret´iakovka"'s permanence and familiarity were so cozy that one viewer formed its name into an adjective: "our very own, Tret´iakovian" (*nashe rodnoe*, *tret´iakovskoe*). Or, as another visitor commented in 1957: "There was an epoch of the Renaissance in the West. Now Western art has entered an epoch of degeneration. The center of world art has clearly migrated to the East."[82] We can retrace the path of this migration: from the Pushkin Museum along Volkhonka Street through Borovitskaia Square across the Bol´shoi Kamennyi Bridge onto the Kadashevskaia Embankment up to Lavrushinskii Lane.

The encounter, 1956

The Picasso exhibition was the very antithesis of culture-as-*kul´turnost´*: museum visitors waited in line on the street, in late fall and early winter, for five hours at a time; exposition rooms were crammed, people nudged each other and shouted.[83] And for some viewers, the exhibition also raised serious questions about its claims to culture-as-*kul´tura*. The paintings could only embarrass those who looked at them.[84] "How," one person asked rhetorically, "could such manure make its way into an exhibit in our own (*otechestvennyi*) museum," presuming that "our own" stood for better, cultured, and realist, and that value, culture, and realism were inseparable. How could "these paintings exist in such a respectable place as the A. S. Pushkin Museum"?[85] This visitor, who "felt that it was [her] duty to express [her] opinion" at great length and so emotionally, identified herself through viewing (as Nina the Viewer, Zriteleva) and through the universality of her experience ("one of many").[86] In doing so, she reaffirmed the central principles of

80. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1341, l. 172, 174, 175; ibid., d. 1344, l. 43; ibid., d. 1339, l. 28, 32, 46; see also ibid., d. 521, l. 99.

81. Besides the paintings of the Russian realists, Tret´iakov also sought out portraits of great Russian artists and writers, and created a portrait gallery that embodied Russian culture. I. S. Nenarokomova, *Pavel Tret´iakov i ego galereia* (M.: Galart, 1994), 31-32, 83-96; "P. M. Tret´iakov i ego sobiratel´skaia deiatel´nost´," in *Gosudarstvennaia Tret´iakovskaia galereia. Ocherki istorii, 1856-1917* (L.: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1981), esp. 67-68, 101-102.

82. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1336, l. 26 (quotation); ibid., d. 1341, l. 170 (quotation); see also ibid., d. 1344, l. 2, 49.

83. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 26, 27; Dukel´skaia interview, ASB-6, tape 149.

84. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 17-19; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 7; for a more general statement, see ibid., d. 2650, l. 102-103ob.

85. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 16, 19.

86. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 19.

socialist aesthetics in which the ordinary viewer was the supreme judge, the art critic, and even the artist, who had simply delegated the act of creation to professionals, but nonetheless remained the source of inspiration. The generic viewer Zriteleva knew that she did not understand Picasso, because he was "the greatest cynic of our times," a "corrupter of art" (but also its "seducer"), who had no respect for spectators and fancied himself possessing some special vision unknown to others. "What a cynical attitude toward the viewer," exclaimed another visitor, himself an artist from a provincial city. "Cynical," because it felt like a prank, or a lie: was Picasso serious? or maybe it was a trick, and we are supposed to laugh with him, lest he laugh at us? Viewers expressed this concern in the language of deception: "mockery," "distorted mirrors," "grimacing," "palming off," "mystery," "enigma," "devilry," "seduction."[87]

There seemed to be not one but two "liars": Picasso and Soviet cultural authorities. As it turned out in the beginning of 1956, the real and the fantastic, truth and falsehood were not easily discernible. Many viewers, whether they enjoyed or hated the exhibition, were uniformly suspicious of anything "official." Those who welcomed the paintings detected untoward signs in various absences — of brochures, programs, guided tours, or even a separate comment book — and concluded that "somebody" was trying to hide the exhibition and hush up the exchange of opinions.[88] In contrast to many subsequent foreign art exhibitions, the conversation was not primarily about the transparency of content; viewers conceded that much of Picasso was not easily, or at all, accessible. What troubled them, instead, was whether Picasso spoke the truth, by whichever means he chose, even when they did not understand and accept the means. They used the prevailing vocabulary, with references to sincerity and truth-seeking. It was "not always intelligible, but, surely, it was enormous and sincere art. For it is said, 'seek and thou shall find'" — Picasso's quest assured his honesty. And while for some people Picasso was a truth-seeker, for others he was a truth-teller; as several students affirmed in a comment, "Picasso would not lie to us." Those who detested the paintings prided themselves on being rebels, and spoke in similar terms: "No, true Soviet youth would not be deceived by Picasso. There is no secret and no mysticism in his 'works.'"[89] What today may sound like regurgitation of newspaper speak,[90] for them was an expression of thoughtful, independent, "courageous, honest," "private opinion," in opposition to "the official opinion (*ofitsial´noe mnenie*)."[91] Was it not an officially sanctioned exhibition? Was it not held in the Soviet shrine of high culture? And did not Ehrenburg, the Soviet Union's chief connoisseur of

87. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 16, 18-19, 20, 22; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2648, l. 59ob.; ibid., d. 3208, l. 9.

88. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 6.

89. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 7, 13, 20.

90. Reid, "The Exhibition," 118; idem, "In the Name," 703.

91. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 19.

art, liken Picasso to the "Renaissance masters," to "his great predecessors Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Goya," to Leonardo da Vinci himself?

In fact, Ehrenburg did even more to disarm potential critics. While professional art periodicals remained silent, the journal *Inostrannaia literatura* featured Ehrenburg's "The Drawings of Pablo Picasso," one of the most famous articles of 1956 that made the October volume of the journal a bibliographic rarity, perpetually missing from regional libraries.[92] Published on the eve of the exhibition, this article situated Picasso within a confrontation between revolution and reaction. Picasso was an "artist-revolutionary," a "furious rebel," "the greatest inventor"; indeed, so iconoclastic and ground-breaking was his art as to make him vulnerable to charges of "Bolshevism in painting"– charges whose validity he confirmed by becoming a Bolshevik in life, too. Ehrenburg framed Picasso's biography with images of good and evil best known to his readers. The article begins with a child-artist, whose father initiates him into art with drawings of doves; at the end of the article, as the aged artist sends out his doves to all corners of the earth, the child in the artist returns. "Picasso's doves are astonishingly pure, moving, and at the same time defenseless, like a child, and invincible, like the conscience of peoples." Picasso's detractors are none other than the paradigmatic forces of evil — Hitler and Truman, the former having ousted his paintings from museums, the latter having announced his art "depraved" and "corrupting." In Ehrenburg's quotations, Uncle Sam speaks in a language strikingly similar to that of Soviet viewers.[93]

They read this article before visiting the museum and responded to it, directly or indirectly, in their comments. The scant information available about Picasso at that time, including Ehrenburg's article, with much space allotted to the creation of *Guernica* from the debris of the destroyed city, focused on Picasso's membership in the Communist Party, his 1950 International Peace Prize, and his anti-war stance in painting and political practice. It was difficult to employ the language of his detractors, not only because Uncle Sam had used it, but also because it was aimed at a Communist. Viewers' denunciation of Picasso's art was neither comprehensive nor absolute; even the harshest opponents absolved certain works and conceded that he had exceptional talent and extraordinary passion, however misused.[94] When viewers found Picasso's women appalling and his doves "primitive and sentimental," they "nonetheless wanted to understand [him] without guesses, without conjectures."[95] And so, even as many people rejected Picasso's paintings, they did not reject Picasso himself. This is an important difference between the reception of Picasso and that of other Western modern artists.

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92. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2603, l. 19.

93. Ilya Ehrenburg, "K risunkam Pablo Pikasso," *Inostrannaia literatura* 10 (1956): 243-253; idem, "Pablo Pikasso," in *Ss*, vol. 6, 181; in his memoirs, Ehrenburg compared Hitler and Truman to Soviet critics of the 1940s, *LGZh*, ibid., 542.

94. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 9, 14, 16, 20-21, 22; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1364, l. 10; for similar concerns and ideas among professional artists, see Vakidin, 226.

95. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 5, 6, 10; ibid., 1204, op. 2, d. 2614, l. 61-62.

Reconciling Picasso's communism and cubism was most challenging. An elderly woman, who had seen a Picasso painting in the 1920s, was astounded to learn from an encyclopedia that the very same artist who had painted "three or four terrible women" — "a revoltingly concocted picture [...] (where do you see naked women of brown color?)" — was also "a communist and our contemporary, and that he drew the 'peace dove,' the symbol of peace." Perhaps, suggested another viewer, the distorted pictures were entirely accidental, while Picasso's dove, "which, without a doubt, has nothing to do with abstractionism, but, on the contrary, has a great realist meaning," was the core of his work.[96] In 1962, faculty members at the Surikov Art Institute had considerable difficulty explaining to students why Picasso was awarded a second Lenin Peace Prize. On the eve of the scandalous MOSKh exhibition, they complained to the institute's party committee: "Students ask about Picasso; he received an International Prize. Picasso's most recent art is bourgeois. This makes the upbringing (*vospitanie)* of students difficult." They understood that "with his public activity he works for us, and with his art, against us," but how was this contradiction between one's political activity and artistic creativity to be explained to students? Were both not the product of the artist's worldview; were they not organically linked; did art not follow politics and did politics not reflect art?[97]

Perhaps it was not cubism at all but a higher, unfamiliar form of realism? According to one respondent, a student, this "realism" "was the most correct and most truthful, most necessary" kind of realism, much more necessary than replicas of the classics. It was the realism of the 20th century, "in which everything is movement and the swiftness of perception," it was realism for the young, for those born in this century, who "feel our age in Picasso's paintings."[98] Comments register viewers' keen awareness of generation and time: "our age," the distinctiveness of the 20th century, and Picasso's unique capacity to respond to its terror and thrill. It was not timelessness but the very temporal immediacy that made for the paintings' realism, as viewers insisted, identifying themselves with both "the age" and its chronicler. Just as acutely, some people recognized that they lived in a special year and described it as a watershed. The opening of the exhibition was central to this recognition, to viewers' temporal awareness. In the words of a student, it was "the greatest event in our cultural life, at least in the last ten years" — or even in several decades, as Ehrenburg told the frenzied crowd anxious to get into the museum: "Comrades, you have waited for this exhibition for twenty-five years, now wait

96. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2616, l. 111ob-112ob; ibid., d. 2644, l. 47; ibid., d. 3208, l. 10; ibid., d. 2641, l. 98; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 22; Slavkin, 52.

97. Tsentral´nyi arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Moskvy [hereafter TsAOPIM] f. 3991, Partiinaia organizatsiia Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo khudozhestvennogo instituta im. V. I. Surikova, op. 1, d. 11, l. 23-24, 34, 35.

98. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 2, 5; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 3, 4; see also ibid., d. 2616, l. 50-54; ibid., d. 2644, l. 160ob-161; ibid., d. 2645, l. 149.

calmly for twenty-five minutes."[99] The exhibition was an invitation to rebel against the past — the way Picasso had done.

For those who commented on the Picasso exhibition in 1956, "the past" was the Stalin past, and it meant obscurantism, obsoleteness, and immobility. This might explain why poems about Picasso abound in references to movement. "The last Russian futurist," Savelii Grinberg (1914-2003) conveys the meaning of the 1956 exhibition through the contrast of movement and torpidity. His autobiographical character, "the rhyme-catcher," visits the exhibition that marks the end of the world. Or at least of his world, because the "Picasso of the Apocalypse" in the poem is not only the demolisher of form or the creator of *Guernica*, but is, above all, the Picasso of 1956, when "Soso" (Stalin) died and "the deck of the earth tilted." From the very first lines, Grinberg suggestively connected his commentary with Aleksandr Radischev's condemnation of autocracy, lawlessness, and serfdom in *The Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*. The opening line of Grinberg's poem is a paraphrase of Radischev's epigraph to his *Journey* which portrays serfdom as a *monstrum horrendum*. Picasso might have been a *monstrum horrendum* for Soviet authorities, but in Grinberg's depiction, he is a playful "monster," the obscurantist, aggressive crowd ("even the one-eyed and even the squint-eyed") that takes on the monstrous traits.[100]

The past also stood for isolation from Europe, or, in the words of Ehrenburg's readers, for the "Great Wall of China" separating "us from Western culture."[101] After reading Ehrenburg's memoirs in 1963, 26-year old engineer Avaev extracted the expression "iron curtain" from standard newspaper denunciations of "imperialist powers" and projected it onto the domestic cultural context:

> The iron curtain used to divide art into official art and art for the soul, for the people. The great artists who belonged to movements that differed from socialist realism were a proscribed subject [...] during the time of the cult of personality.

Between 1963 and the "time of the cult of personality," Avaev and the generation for which he claimed to speak had learned "how uneducated [they] [we]re, how 'gray' [they] [we]re."[102] Just as the indignant viewers, Picasso's admirers were

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99. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 222, l. 5; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 3; Ehrenburg, *LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 552. For similar calculations and sentiments, see RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1364, l. 16ob.

100. Savelii Grinberg, "Rifmoulovitel´ na vystavke Pablo Pikasso 1956 goda," in *Onegostishiia i ongsty* (Tomsk & M.: Vodolei Publishers, 2003), 190. On Radishchev's epigraph, itself a paraphrase of a paraphrase, and its literary sources: L. I. Kulakova, V. A. Zapadov, *A. N. Radishchev, "Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu." Kommentarii* (L.: Prosveshchenie, 1974), 34; E. A. Vil´k, "'Stoglavoe zlo' (Epigraf 'Puteshestviia' Radishcheva i misticheskaia literatura XVIII v.)," in M. V. Stroganov and S. A. Vasil´eva, eds., *A. N. Radishchev: issledovaniia i kommentarii. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Tver´: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001), 30-44.

101. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2641, l. 117.

102. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2643, l. 50.

ashamed, the only difference being that the former were ashamed to look at the paintings, and the latter to look at themselves. "Often I can't answer to those who abuse [Picasso], but then I simply shut my ears. Then I blush. Then I am ashamed [...] of my own ignorance," wrote a twenty-year old student from Baku in an angry outburst against Picasso's detractors and against himself.[103]

Similarly, his "lack of education" prevented a 24-year old soldier from understanding Picasso's paintings. A former mechanic, educated in a factory technical school, Aleksandr Liakhovitskii saw the Picasso exhibition at the Hermitage during a trip to Leningrad in 1956. To his "great regret, most of the paintings were not yet altogether clear for [him]," but he was convinced that diligent study would help him to gain a better understanding of Picasso. Aleksandr compared Picasso to the early Mayakovsky, whom he studied "line by line," "sometimes in the evenings, together" with his fellow servicemen. He wished to study Picasso in the same way — to discern the meaning of paintings, line by line as befitting a text. He had searched everywhere in Leningrad and Narva, where he had been stationed, but "there [was] nothing to read about [the paintings], and almost nobody to ask." And so, in pursuit of the images (*Cat and Bird, The Two Saltimbanques*), which had seized his memory and imagination, Aleksandr turned to Ehrenburg for photographs of Picasso's paintings. Aleksandr took Ehrenburg for a teacher and something of a confidant, presenting himself as a naive yet earnest young man. In response, Ehrenburg sent some reproductions, and we can well envision how twenty-four-year-olds from the military unit 41035 scrutinized the pictures.[104]

It was not yet intelligible art, but it was already breathtaking. And it was not yet too late, but it was already too little.[105] "We want [to see] Matisse after Picasso. We want [a] fuller exhibition of Picasso's production. We want the freedom of the [sic] discussion."[106] At the Picasso exhibition, they got what they wanted; the museum personnel, unprepared and overwhelmed, simply ceded the parquet battleground. "Viewers interpret[ed] on their own, argue[d]," and were delighted: "[there were] discussions at the exhibition, conversations," "heated arguments [...] debates right here, in the exhibit room, all highly portentous."[107]

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103. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2613, l. 12-14.

104. RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2605, l. 68-69ob; see also ibid., d. 2614, l. 140-140ob; ibid., d. 2615, l. 114.

105. AGMII f. 5, op. 2, d. 222, l. 2, 5, 7; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 4, 5; see also ibid., d. 2605, l. 68ob.

106. AGMII f. 5, op. 2, d. 222, l. 2. This comment was written in English. Whatever changes I have introduced are enclosed in the brackets; otherwise, the original syntax has been preserved.

107. AGMII f. 5, op. 2, d. 222, l. 6, 8; see also ibid., op. 1, d. 2025, l. 119-20; shortly thereafter, viewers also got to see Matisse. In the beginning of 1957, Jean Vercors came to the Soviet Union with an exhibition of reproductions and illustrations, which included several Matisses.

Picasso as a political metaphor

It was all highly portentous because, soon enough, heated arguments and debates invaded student dormitories, Komsomol cells, editorial offices, artists' meetings, and city squares. Without official approval but with "artistic freedom" as the main slogan, students gathered to discuss Picasso in several arts institutes and at the Moscow State University.[108] In Leningrad, the debate spilled out of the Hermitage onto the streets when students decided to hold a discussion in the Arts Square, for lack of a better place. The students gathered, only to postpone the meeting for the following week — a plan that the local party authorities interpreted as malicious. According to the Leningrad obkom secretary, the instigators of the meeting were "a small group of students," perhaps the very same ones who at the Picasso exhibition "displayed uncritical attitude toward formalist works of foreign art, considering Picasso's paintings the highest accomplishment." And, according to the meeting's participants, "there was nothing illicit there"; they came intending to talk about art, not politics. On the evening of December 21st, the students (300 to 500 people by various counts) gathered again, but some were promptly apprehended by the police before they had a chance to start the discussion. Having been ordered to disperse, the students walked to the quarters of the Leningrad Union of Soviet Artists (LOSKh).[109]

Just at that time, selected viewers, many from the factory bench, assembled at LOSKh to evaluate an exhibition of Leningrad artists. Until the students arrived, the viewers' conference proceeded according to the customary Soviet ritual of criticism and self-criticism, so that "the artists [could] better realize the weaknesses and deficiencies in their creative activity." The intruders, professing admiration for Picasso and comparing him to Beethoven, argued that "true" art was inaccessible to crowds. Appreciating "true" art was the privilege and the jurisdiction of people with special acumen and aesthetic sensibilities. Local party officials had little doubt that the students from the Leningrad State University and the Conservatory positioned themselves among the elect. Nonetheless, the regional party committee concluded its report to Moscow on an optimistic note: it was "taking measures [...] to suppress encroachments of anti-Soviet hostile elements," the Artists' Union

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Although viewers were well aware that the artworks were reproductions, many nonetheless saw the exhibition as a demonstration of paintings. And for the devotees, there was a volume of critical articles published in 1959. [Vakidin, 205; RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, dd. 1363, 1364; *Matiss: sbornik statei o tvorchestve* (M.: Izd-vo inostrannoi literatury, 1958)]

108. Slepian, 56-57; the institutes included the Stroganov Art School, the Architecture Institute, the Theatre Institute, and the Institute of Cinematography.

109. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 27, l. 102-105; GARF f. 8131, Prokuratura SSSR, op. 31, d. 76945, l. 4; B. B. Vail´, *Osobo opasnyi* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1980), 136, 138-145; for another version of the events, see Mikhail Trofimenkov, "Pablo Pikasso — vozhd´ russkoi revoliutsii," *Kommersant* [Saint Petersburg] (14 December 2001), and *Kul´turnyi sloi: Detonator — Pikasso* (TRK, SPb., Russia, 2004) (Thanks to Petr Bagrov for providing me with a tape of this program).

"strengthened the propaganda of socialist realism in visual art," and in any case, there were very few hostile agitators.[110]

The Central Committee was not convinced because the debate was only tenuously about Picasso.[111] At the heart of such pronouncements was Soviet art — indeed society — while Picasso was a name-metaphor for everything that Soviet society was not. Words triumphed over eyesight already in the Hermitage rooms, where, according to a curator's recollections, "the audience no longer looked at the paintings… [She] remember[s] how [she] kept wanting to say, for God's sake, just look at the paintings."[112] But many were too busy arguing, and aesthetic pronouncements were often mistaken for political attitudes or ethical comportment: viewers who declared, "My grandson can draw this ten times better," risked hearing the retort, "But it is clear that you've been an informer."[113] On December 21st, the most rousing speech, which became a city legend overnight both for its content and for the arrest of its author, Conservatory student Iuliia Krasovskaia, was not about Picasso's art per se. His name connoted debate, argument, and the very possibility of divergent opinions:

> About the Picasso exhibition. I am not a Picasso apologist… Maybe I am not mature enough, maybe this is not real art. One thing was exciting there — the atmosphere of lively debate, when people wanted to find out how art should develop.
>
> The problem is that the concept of socialist realism, which has been hammered into our heads since grade school, has completely discredited itself. /Applause/
>
> In my opinion, socialist realism as such does not exist. /Applause/ …
>
> They say that students reject socialist realism. That's nonsense! We do not reject it; we don't see it. Show us [socialist realism] and we will then gladly stand by it. /Applause/

But more than art was at stake for Krasovskaia and her audience: "Comrades, I want to say that, even throughout my short life, I have noticed how we have a very stagnant atmosphere not only in painting, not only in music […] but generally in all public perceptions (*obshchestvennye vzgliady*)." As Krasovskaia announced, "we came here to talk about something at last, but another militia platoon followed behind us." In this imagery, students took the place of prisoners or camp-inmates; in her allusions to "the Arakcheev regime," innocence and youth were pitted against government force.[114] "Picasso," "students," and militia detachments were figurative terms as much as they were a reality of 1956.

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110. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 27, l. 102-105; Val´ran, 58.

111. RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 25, l. 106-108, 110-112; ibid., d. 27, l. 102-105; ibid., d. 47, l. 58, 94-5; ibid., d. 48, l. 16-24.

112. Dukel´skaia interview, ASB-6, tape 149.

113. Anatolii Naiman, Iakov Gordin in *Kul´turnyi sloi: Detonator — Pikasso*.

114. GARF f. 8131, op. 31, d. 76945, l. 2-4. Krasovskaia was released shortly thereafter due to insufficient evidence of anti-Soviet activity.

The identification of Picasso with youthfulness, and the self-identification with both, was strong enough to make its way into participants' memoirs. Boris Vail´, presenting the whole affair as a milestone on his way to political dissent, recalled the LOSKh auditorium where spatial divisions corresponded to ideological and generational ones — "decorous public" in the stalls, students, some with long hair, in the gallery.[115] "The respectable public," established artists, party officials, university administrators, and other adults, likewise described Picasso's admirers with images of bohemia — youth disheveled, unkempt, in narrow pants.[116] These associations lived on beyond the exhibition, beyond 1956, and resonated in literature; thus, Evgenii Evtushenko paired Picasso with innocence and youth in his 1960 poem, "The Nihilist." This is how authorities in school and at home think of the student who loves Picasso, rejects Gerasimov, commits stock ideological offenses, and appears a hopeless case. But in the end, he saves a friend's life, losing his own in the process, and thereby proves his innocence, as well as his moral superiority. His death redeems all those things he had embraced in life — Picasso, narrow pants, passionate arguments.[117]

Report after report at every party and Komsomol level described these arguments, unauthorized meetings, provocative questions, bare captiousness, and demagogic speeches in institutions of higher learning all over the country. Alternatively known as "demagogues," "nihilists," "wavering intellectuals," or "accidental elements," students seized public spaces to deliver their "pessimistic pronouncements" and "unhealthy views." All this — especially the scale, zeal, and ostentation — looked so bizarre that municipal party authorities dispatched special inspectors to various universities; the inspectors, for their part, could do no better to explain the phenomenon than point fingers at fictitious "outsiders" of questionable morals.[118] "*Stiliagi*" and "women of vulgar mores" "infiltrated" the Picasso

115. Vail´, 144; Kathleen E. Smith, "A New Generation of Article 58ers: 'Anti-Soviet' Students, 1956-57," paper presented at the conference "The Thaw: Soviet Culture and Society in the 1950s and 1960s," Berkeley, 13-15 May 2005. Smith discusses in greater detail the place of the Leningrad episode in the evolution of political dissidents. She places this incident in a series of similarly-patterned events — student disturbances and scandals in 1956 — to explore the nature of seditious speech and the making of political actors. (I thank Kathleen Smith for the permission to refer to her work.)

116. TsAOPIM f. 1007, Partiinaia organizatsiia MOSKh RSFSR, op. 2, d. 122, l. 98.

117. Evgenii Evtushenko, "Nigilist," *Iunost´* 12 (1960): 7.

118. This brief overview is based on the following: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial´no-politicheskoi istorii/Tsentr khraneniia dokumentatsii molodezhnykh organizatsii [hereafter RGASPI] f. M-1, TsK VLKSM, op. 46, d. 190, 192, 199; TsAOPIM f. 4, Moskovskii gorodskoi komitet KPSS, op. 113, d. 21, 41, esp. l. 1-51, 89-98, 135-138; ibid., f. 3991, op. 1, d. 6, l. 221-223; ibid., d. 7, esp. l. 89, 90, 92, 96; RGANI f. 5, op. 36, d. 47, l. 12, 14; Tsentral´nyi arkhiv goroda Moskvy [hereafter TsAGM] f. 1609, Moskovskii universitet im. M. V. Lomonosova, op. 2, d. 410, l. 22-24; ibid., d. 415, l. 82-84. The gathering in the Arts Square began as a departmental discussion at Leningrad University, and by that time, the administration had already had a bad experience with such ventures: it had lost grounds (literally and figuratively) just a month earlier at a readers' conference about Vladimir Dudintsev's novel *Not By Bread Alone*. [Vail´, 137; Revol´t Pimenov, *Vospominaniia* vol. 1 (M.: Panorama, 1996), 33-47, 75-78.] For the 1956 student discussions and a comparison with

discussion at the Architecture Institute. There, almost from the start of the meeting, faculty and party officials surrendered the podium to "students from other universities" who "underrated the achievements of Soviet art, […] defamed our art and Soviet reality."[119] The discussion "Poetry and Public Life" at the Gorky Literature Institute also went amiss; the situation was "unhealthy," there were whistles and catcalling, and some speakers abandoned party guidance for alternative authorities, chief among them Picasso.[120]

Central to most discussions gone awry that year was the fact of discussion itself: the idea of unhampered speech, the right of assembly, open criticism, uninhibited conversation and creativity.[121] The authorities knew that, and the particularly farsighted ones, like the director of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, moved swiftly to nip Picasso discussions in the bud. He was afraid — not of the art, but of the symbolic associations with debate and publicity that Picasso had assumed in the course of the exhibition. "The discussion could have become a kind of anarchic rally on any issue," on any political issue.[122] In Leningrad, lower-level KGB investigators were convinced that the Picasso discussion in the Arts Square would amount to "little Budapest."[123]

And then there were university wall newspapers, whose very titles encapsulated the relationship between conversation and creativity: *Tribuna*, *Kul´tura*, *Molodost´*, *Energiia*, and *Svezhie golosa*. Bems, Viktor Slavkin's autobiographical character in his play about stolen biographies, describes a typical wall newspaper of 1956. An effort of several students, the newspaper's articles and drawings were pasted against the background of "a woman's face with a dove's wing instead of hair across the entire sheet." It was a special New Year's edition, and appropriately enough, it was about Picasso, associated with new and auspicious beginnings.[124] In the meantime, the newspaper *Kul´tura* of the Leningrad Technological Institute advised its readers: "There is no art without deformation." Sentences from its articles became mottos, first for the crowded students, "who gasped or argued," then for the Komsomol Central Committee, which took them for insurgent slogans.[125] The wall newspapers,

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the late 1940s, see Juliane Fürst, "The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy Between Stalin and Khrushchev," in Polly Jones, ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

119. TsAOPIM f 4, op. 113, d. 42, l. 5, 6, 110, 111.

120. RGASPI f. M-1, op. 46, d. 199, l. 169-71. Another alternative authority cited was Boris Pasternak.

121. RGASPI f. M-1, op. 46, d. 192, l. 196-201; ibid., d. 199, l. 99-101, 117-119, 127-28, 170.

122. TsAOPIM f. 4, op. 113, d. 42, l. 110.

123. Pimenov, 76; see also TsAOPIM f. 3991, op. 1, d. 7, l. 9-10.

124. Slavkin, 51; for other wall newspapers, see RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2615, l. 38-39; TsAOPIM f. 4, op. 113, d. 21, l. 17, 27-29, 88; RGASPI f. M-1, op. 46, d. 192, l. 197-200, ibid., d. 199, l. 74-75, 128-29.

125. On the creation and demise of *Kul´tura*: Bobyshev, 147-58; RGASPI f. M-1, op. 46, d. 192, l. 147; Valerii Ronkin, *Na smenu dekabriam prikhodiat ianvari… Vospominaniia byvshego brigadmil´tsa i podpol´shchika, a pozzhe — politzakliuchennogo i dissidenta* (M.: Zven´ia, 2003), 96-98.

equally outrageous for their content and publicity, were shut down, taken down, torn down.[126] In the quick-paced and quick-tempered atmosphere of November 1956, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party discussed what to do with "unhealthy elements" and how to "purify institutions of higher learning."[127] The result was the infamous December 19 letter on "the prevention of sallies by anti-Soviet, hostile elements," circulated to all republican, regional, and municipal party organizations. Communists were instructed to stand "vigilant guard," and from 1956 to 1957, the number of people convicted for counter-revolutionary activity increased almost four-fold.[128]

But none of this could change the fact that Picasso visited the Leningrad Technological Institute. Or rather, it was the poet Pavel Antokol´skii, but, "artistically covering his bald skull with a beret," he looked like Picasso to an Institute student. Several years later, the student, Dmitrii Bobyshev, would become one of Akhmatova's orphans, and Antokol´skii would write an article, "Fathers and Sons," about the generation of Bobyshevs.[129] The Great Father was gone and the Great Family lay in shambles. To paraphrase Evtushenko, another spokesman for this generation, nobody really wanted to be "Stalin's heir."[130] In 1956, many young people "sought a Teacher, with a capital T," and half a century later, recalled this search and the "astound[ing]" Picasso exhibition in the same line of thought.[131] The progeny without patrimony, they became Akhmatova's orphans, as well as Picasso's heirs.

Picasso as a poetic metaphor

"I saw […] the real heirs of Picasso," wrote Evtushenko after visiting the artist in 1963.[132] Such visits became ever more frequent and widely publicized in the Soviet

126. Bobyshev, 155.

127. *Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964. Chernovye protokol´nye zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy* vol. 1 (M.: ROSSPEN, 2003), 202, 212; for the text of the letter, see *Doklad*, 393-401; for responses, see ibid., 596-697.

128. Gennadii Kuzovkin, "Partiino-komsomol´skie presledovaniia po politicheskim motivam v period rannei 'ottepeli'"; Elena Papovian and Aleksandr Papovian, "Uchastie Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR v vyrabotke repressivnoi politiki, 1957-1958 gg."; Elena Papovian, "Primenenie stat´i 58-10 UK RSFSR v 1957-1958 gg. Po materialam Verkhovnogo suda SSSR i Prokuratury SSSR v GARFe," in *Korni travy: sbornik statei molodykh istorikov* (M.: Zven'ia, 1996), esp. 97-110.

129. Bobyshev, 152-3; Pavel Antokol´skii, "Otsy i deti," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (11 December 1962), and, in response, Iu. Idashkin, "Otsy i deti? Otkrytoe pis´mo poetu P. G. Antokol´skomu," *Komsomol´skaia pravda* (18 January 1963).

130. Evgenii Evtushenko, "Nasledniki Stalina," *Pravda* (21 October 1962).

131. Revekka Frumkina, "Spichechnyi korobok i sinee ukho," http://azbuka.gif.ru/critics/box-ear.

132. Cited in A. V. Medvedenko, *"Gernika" prodolzhaet bor´bu* (M.: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1989), 40.

press of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Before Picasso's art was subjected to professional critical analyses, the image of Picasso the person, "a compelling cultural hero," emerged in biographical and anecdotal sketches *à la* Ehrenburg.[133] Picasso's Soviet acquaintances singled out the characteristics that reflected their own aesthetic and political world, at least as much as that of their hero. Consider the four most prominent and reiterated images/themes: innocence of the artist-child; kindness and spontaneity of the artist as *homo ludens*; modesty, austerity, and unpretentiousness; and an attachment to folklore and national traditions that revealed the artist's connection to "the people." Developed by literati, these images became the building blocks in surveys and interpretive articles, which multiplied in the 1960s. First-hand testimonies and the persona they presented were instrumental in the process whereby the Soviet cultural establishment admitted Picasso into its pantheon of classics as the greatest living artist. The 1956 exhibition prompted the writing of first-hand accounts and thus reached far more people than the thousands that came to the museum. The earliest genre of such writing was an account of "a visit to Picasso."

While Ehrenburg's article was an introduction to the exhibition, the filmmaker Sergei Iutkevich (1904-85) responded both to the retrospective and to Henri-Georges Clouzot's film *Le Mystère Picasso*.[134] An exploration of Picasso's creative process, the movie was reluctantly purchased by the Ministry of Culture and shown to a limited audience.[135] Iutkevich admired Clouzot's original conception and technical implementation but endeavored to show Picasso *sans mystère*. A celebrated director and frequent member of the Cannes festival jury, Iutkevich consorted with leftist intellectuals in Paris and commanded cultural authority at home. Through a series of encounters and informal conversations with Picasso, Iutkevich presented the artist as an ingénu. He is unassuming: his villa "is furnished modestly" and even "ascetically"; he invariably wears a black sweater, while his formal attire is wrinkled, faded, thoroughly outmoded, and buried deeply in some closet, so that when the time comes to appear at the Cannes festival, "the house [has to be] turned inside out." Like Ehrenburg, who had described how Italian workers welcomed Picasso, Iutkevich, too, portrayed the artist as a man of the people. His Picasso prefers Spanish peasant songs (*narodnye pesni*, *pesnia ispanskogo krest´ianina*) to jazz, a symbol of American cultural expansion.[136] More than a decade later, in a radio program on Picasso, Iutkevich would still refer to him as a

133. The term is from Eunice Lipton, *Picasso Criticism, 1901-1939: The Making of An Artist-Hero* (New York: Garland, 1976), 346; Lipton reminds us: "any image of Picasso has as much to do with the people writing about him and the times they are writing in as it does with his work itself." (347)

134. S. Iutkevich, "Nash tovarishch," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (30 October 1956); idem., "Pikasso bez tain," *Iskusstvo kino*, 3 (1957): 150-54.

135. RGANI f. 5, op. 30, d. 172, l. 170-71; ibid., op. 36, d. 27, l. 80-81. The film was purchased upon the instruction from the Central Committee's Ideological Department.

136. Iutkevich, "Pikasso," 153; Ehrenburg, *LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 551; on Picasso's deep-seated anti-Americanism, see Utley, 105, 166-67.

"hospitable French toiler," his black sweater now fashioned into a recognizable outfit of "dockers, metal-workers, or freight drivers."[137] As for fame, "he does not think about his fame at all, and every time he receives yet another proof of it, he is surprised like a spontaneous child." "Child" is another recurrent characterization in Iutkevich's account: Picasso dresses up in costumes, assumes various gaits, wears a clown's nose.[138]

Echoing these stories of pranks and transfigurations, the 1960s writings depicted Picasso as a narrator of fairytales or a fairytale creature himself ("a legendary troll"). His art assumed magical qualities (*skazka*, *skazochnyi*, *charodei*).[139] In one of the more insightful and sympathetic essays on Picasso's fairytale world, the literary critic Dmitrii Moldavskii discussed cubism as "a striving toward simplicity and lucidity" akin to "folk ornaments of European peoples" ("*lubok*, embroidery, fretwork").[140] Moldavskii was a devotee of Picasso, especially after having seen his drawings on the walls of Iutkevich's apartment — a small gallery, which the filmmaker used as a litmus test for evaluating the sensibilities of his visitors. Having passed the test, Moldavskii went on to investigate numerous subjects, including Picasso's impact on Iutkevich's cinematography and Valentin Kataev's prose.[141] For his part, Kataev took the artist's child-like simplicity a step further — to accessibility. "Picasso has a child's soul, pure, primeval, lucid," and that is why, according to Kataev, adults do not understand him, but children "unravel in a split second the secret intention of the artist-genius."[142]

These sketches did more than present a difficult foreign artist in ways familiar to Soviet audiences; they also Russified Picasso. He learns the Russian word for "devil" and calls himself *chert*; his bedtime readings include Mikhail Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don* and Ehrenburg's *The Fall of Paris*; he loves to listen to *Katiusha*, tapping in rhythm, dons a Ukrainian embroidered shirt (a gift from Iutkevich), and resembles "a Poltava peasant." And he creates for himself a Russian name, Pablushka, an appellation of endearment.[143] Iutkevich contrasted the reception of Clouzot's film in Moscow and Cannes: in Moscow, viewers applauded "repeatedly" as the contours and colors appeared on the screen; in Cannes, he "witnessed how, in the middle of the performance, some outraged viewers demonstratively left the room. Ladies in luxurious ball dresses and gentlemen in

137. "Pablo Pikasso," Gosteleradiofond no. B-019657; Iutkevich, "Pikasso," 152.

138. Iutkevich, "Pikasso," 152-53.

139. V. Prokof´ev, "Pikasso," *Ogonek*, 44 (1966): 8-9; "legendary troll": Gosteleradiofond no. B-019657.

140. D. Moldavskii, "O Pablo Pikasso," *Neva*, 12 (1962): 193-200, here 195-96, 199-200.

141. D. Moldavskii, *Sneg i vremia: Zapiski literatora* (L.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1989), 185, 224-26, 257; idem, *S Maiakovskim v teatre i kino: Kniga o Sergee Iutkeviche* (M.: Vserossiiskoe teatral´noe obshchestvo, 1975), 301-302.

142. Valentin Kataev, "Khudozhnik mira," *Iunost´*, 8 (1962): 80-81; V. Gaevskii, "Na vystavke Pikasso," *Teatr*, 3 (1967): 86-88.

143. Ehrenburg, *LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 548; Iutkevich, "Pikasso," 153.

white dinner jackets whistled impatiently, forgetting *bon ton*."[144] Bourgeois whistles and Soviet applause: there was no doubt where Picasso met genuine appreciation. Meanwhile, Soviet journals printed reproductions of Picasso's paintings and engravings with his signature rendered in Cyrillic.

As techniques of familiarization, these themes and images underpinned the attempts of popular and art professional press, during the 1960s, to explain Picasso. Most readers had not seen his art, so, in addition to abundant illustrations, the main explanatory device was the verbalization of feelings and associations induced by the paintings. Designed to overwhelm the readers emotionally, the prose was poetic and evocative. Such writings began by announcing that Picasso's art was "difficult to comprehend and explain," thus absolving people who did not understand it, while endowing the authors with a special explanatory mission and with authority.[145] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a soul-searching reconsideration of aesthetics — the relationship between the verbal and the visual, as well as "aesthetic education" — preoccupied artists and critics, writers and filmmakers, musicians and choreographers, pedagogues and propagandists.[146] The writings about Picasso belonged in this context, and the young critics who took up his cause would later recall themselves as *Kulturträger*.[147] Such authors tried to unravel the artist's intentions, to position themselves among reader-viewers ("let us imagine," "look closely"), and to exemplify the mental work that goes (or should go) into aesthetic reception.[148]

Much of this work was associational: "everything in Picasso's paintings relies on the complex associational world of the viewer who is used to making inferences from images." "The objects are linked; they speak to each other… The contours of a woman's face take the oval shape of a dove. The brows wreathe into an olive-branch. And what is this? Hair? Or the wings of a dove?"[149] What compelled viewers to visualize correlations among disparate objects was Picasso's "method." Most authors agreed that the pictures reflected not reality, but its refraction in the artist's mind, and, increasingly, saw nothing wrong with this. In "striving to depict immediate ideas and thoughts," Picasso skipped a step in the process of visual cognition, forcing viewers to do the same.[150] To retrace the process for their

144. Iutkevich, "Pikasso," 151; Ehrenburg, "Pablo," in *Ss* 6, 191.

145. Moldavskii, "O Pablo," 193 (quotation); L. Zhadova, "Pablo Pikasso i monumental'noe iskusstvo," *Iskusstvo*, 1 (1968): 53-60, here 55.

146. For the beginnings of the "aesthetic education" campaign, see RGANI f. 5, op. 30, d. 281, l. 55-64, esp. l. 59, 60. For analyses, see: Reid, "In the Name," 696-97; idem, "Destalinization and Taste, 1953-1963," *Journal of Design History* 10, 2 (1997): 177-201; Iurii Gerchuk, "The Aesthetics of Everyday Life in the Khrushchev Thaw in the USSR (1954-64)," in Reid and Crowley, 89-91.

147. Interview with I. N. Golomshtok, London, 2 September 2004.

148. Moldavskii, "O Pablo," 196-97; Prokof´ev, "Pikasso," 8.

149. Ibid., 196; Andrei Voznesenskii, *Proraby dukha* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1984), 357.

150. Prokof´ev, "Pikasso"; Zhadova, 55-56; Moldavskii, "O Pablo," 196; Igor´ Golomshtok and Andrei Siniavskii, *Pikasso* (M.: Izd-vo Znanie, 1960), 17, 39; G. Nedoshivin, "Pablo Pikasso," *Tvorchestvo* 10 (1966): 20-22, here 22; *Zapadnoevropeiskaia zhivopis´ i skul´ptura. Al´bom* (M.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1966), nos. 112-114.

readers, critics broke down the pictures into constituent elements and explained the intended effects of various details, deformations, and uses of color. They also supplied illustrations to document consecutive simplification, reduction, and generalization from realistic to schematic, as, for example, in Picasso's sketches of a bull (1945-46).[151]

The authors who engaged the reader-viewer in this way most consistently were Igor´ Golomshtok, a specialist in contemporary Western art, and Andrei Siniavskii, a literary scholar. Their 1960 brochure *Picasso* was the first professional study published in Russia since 1933. True to their thesis — that Picasso created "paintings-concepts, paintings-symbols" — the authors renounced the obsession with narrative, customary in Soviet criticism and, instead, sought to interpret the symbolic meanings of paintings. Golomshtok had worked as a guide at the Picasso exhibition and was experienced in answering viewers' questions. Acutely conscious of their audience, Golomshtok and Siniavskii anticipated its reactions, spoke about "an unprepared gaze" and "a first encounter," and structured the book as an instructional manual, alternating illustrations and explanations.[152] Indeed, some readers considered the brochure an exhibition catalogue. After Siniavskii's arrest in 1965, the book was withdrawn from public circulation, but readers preserved it in home libraries as a memento.[153] A product of cross-disciplinary collaboration, the brochure represents Soviet literati's interest in Picasso and a symbiosis of literary and visual analyses. Accompanied by Ehrenburg's foreword — a personal account and a version of his 1956 article, the book also represents a symbiosis of scholarly and memoiristic writing that was central to Picasso's domestication in the Soviet Union.[154]

Just as the brochure was going into press, the journal *Novyi mir* began to serialize Ehrenburg's memoirs *Liudi, gody, zhizn´* (*People, Years, Life*), an encyclopedia of 20th century European and Russian culture. While references to Picasso were dispersed throughout the memoirs, the first book contained an entire chapter on Picasso. The chapter was much the same text as the 1956 article and the brochure's introduction, but its re-publication was significant for three reasons. First, printed in *Novyi mir*, it reached a wider audience than any previous publication. Second, it contextualized Picasso within Ehrenburg's own life and within the life of pre-war and wartime Europe. Picasso appears in the *Rotonde* among other exiles, amidst their pranks, prophesies, poverty, and scandals; he reappears in the narrative at moments of Ehrenburg's emotional crisis and confusion, in times of general foreboding and apocalyptic expectations. Even the structure of the memoir confirmed Picasso's place among momentous events — the chapter was set between a frenzied account of World War I and the news of the

151. Golomshtok and Siniavskii, 38-41.

152. Interview with I. N. Golomshtok; Golomshtok and Siniavskii, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24-28, 30, 42-45, 51-52.

153. Frezinskii, 91n60; conversation with E. D. Antselovich, Moscow, 6 June 2005.

154. Ilya Ehrenburg, "Iz vospominanii o Pablo Pikasso," in Golomshtok and Siniavskii.

tsar's abdication.[155] And finally, by thus situating Picasso, this publication legitimized and romanticized him as a subject of scholarly inquiries and poetic musings.

Indeed, without Ehrenburg's memoirs, we cannot understand the sudden outburst of publications and poetry about Picasso in the 1960s. For example, in Pavel Antokol´skii's poetic cycle *Picasso*, the atmosphere is decidedly *fin-de-siècle* ("Merriment and ruin all around"), pregnant with wars and revolutions. The poem positions Picasso "on the brink of two worlds," on the "eve" of the war, amidst revolutionary "fireballs" that illuminate the "utter darkness" of "the night" enveloping Europe.[156] Antokol´skii (1896-1978) was not much younger than Ehrenburg, and his own memories must have contributed to the imagery. He had a good deal in common with Ehrenburg: a French history buff, he had composed some of the most famous verses about the French Revolution in Russian; an admirer of French culture, he had edited an anthology of French poetry, translating many poems himself. Picasso occupied a special place in his universe. Antokol´skii hung the artist's portrait among photographs and pictures on the wall across from his desk; he "liked the Kabbala of names: Pablo Picasso […] Pablo Antokol´skii."[157] Despite his own experiences and knowledge, Antokol´skii held Ehrenburg in high esteem for meaning "so much in [their] life, and particularly in [his]," and for being "the first person in Russia […] to speak about Picasso."[158] Many formulations in his poem echo (or replicate) those of Ehrenburg's memoirs. Himself an amateur artist, Antokol´skii borrowed the colors from Picasso's palette: to convey the fragility of the old world, "old churches and towers," and of humanity too, the poet colored it all — acrobats, paupers, the universe itself — in blue. Helplessness and hopelessness resonate in his use of the dove image as an adjective, *golubinyi*, which he intertwined with *goluboi*, blue.

But Antokol´skii's Picasso meant more than simply colors. "Picasso" was a literary device, a prism for looking at two problems: first, Russia and Europe, and second, the Poet and Time. Russia *in* Europe: what breaks the spell of darkness over Europe are "the lightning" and "thunder" of the Russian Revolution. As purifying elements, they hold an infinite appeal for Picasso; "merry rain" mixes up his paints, while "the child-lightning" intrudes into his studio, playfully rolls over "the white priming of the canvas," and, in his hands, becomes a dove. There is another "eccentric," "Scythian" presence in Europe — the art collector Sergei Shchukin, who "marches in step with the twentieth century," all the way up "the iron spiral staircase"

155. Ehrenburg, *LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 495-560.

156. *Sumrak*, *zakat* are self-conscious references to Spengler, whom Antokol´skii read many times and considered formative for his own outlook. Shpengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* was translated into Russian as *Zakat Evropy* (M.: Izd-vo L. D. Frenkelia, 1923). Pavel Antokol´skii, *Dnevnik, 1964-1968* (SPb.: Izd-vo Pushkinskogo fonda, 2002), 11, 151.

157. *Vospominaniia o Pavle Antokol´skom: Sbornik* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1987), 31, 47, 55, 59, 90, 92, 179, 180, 326-327, 342; Antokol´skii, *Dnevnik*, 136, 137, 148.

158. Antokol´skii, *Dnevnik*, 79.

to Picasso's studio. There he finds paintings that make him groan, discredit his ideals and beliefs, and chase away his sleep. He is the first to recognize their prophetic character, because he is Russian and thus enjoys a special relationship with the twentieth century. He buys the paintings — fifty years later, this very acquisition will constitute the centerpiece of the modern Western art collections at the Pushkin Museum and the Hermitage, as well as much of the 1956 Picasso exhibition.

Secondly, in the poem, Time is a key protagonist that converses with Picasso, challenges or commands him.[159] Like Ehrenburg, and in very similar terms, Antokol´skii elevated Picasso into an absolute category, on a par with Time, the Devil, and God. Time dares Picasso to argue "with God Himself / With the Devil," and, according to Ehrenburg, he does confront God about the principles of creation. The reason Antokol´skii's (and Ehrenburg's) Picasso could argue with God is that the artist has a penetrating gaze: he is a prophet.[160] Time takes him for its companion and shows him the things to come:

> The two of us have to see beyond the range of all telescopes.
> There will be a cannonade in Guernica.
> The dead will arise from the trenches.
> Fury and pity will stand side by side.

With Picasso's help, Antokol´skii reaffirmed the Poet/Artist as Time's counterpart.[161]

Thus, Picasso was mediated for Soviet readers not only through the words of *Kulturträger* but, ultimately, through the poetic Word. And one of the most powerful, as well as officially recognized, poetic words belonged to Vladimir Mayakovsky. In part, Picasso's newly established authority in Soviet culture derived from that of Mayakovsky. He had visited Picasso's studio in 1922, and jotted down brief, complimentary impressions, which were endlessly reproduced in the 1960s.[162] In legitimizing Picasso's demolition of form, in discussing cubism

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159. Indeed, the *Picasso* cycle was included in Antokol´skii's poetic reflections on Time as the "fourth dimension." [*Chetvertoe izmerenie: Stikhi 1962-1963* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1964)] On the problem of time in Antokol´skii, see A. Toom, "Moi ded Pavel Antokol´skii," in *Dnevnik*, 158, 160; Antokol´skii, "Vstuplenie," in *Chetvertoe*; and L. Levin, *Chetyre zhizni. Khronika trudov i dnei Pavla Antokol´skogo* 2nd edition (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1978), 263-267. For Antokol´skii's own assessment of the problem of Time as the most important in the *Picasso* cycle, see ibid., 264.

160. Cf. Ehrenburg: "If [Picasso] is a devil, then he is a special one — the one who has challenged (*posporivshii*) God about the universe." (*LGZh*, book 1, *Ss*, vol. 6, 548); on Picasso as prophet, see ibid., 510, 550. For the centrality of the prophecy theme in Antokol´skii's cycle, see Levin, 264-65.

161. Antokol´skii, "Pikasso," in *Chetvertoe*, 41-60.

162. Vladimir Mayakovsky, "Semidnevnyi smotr frantsuzskoi zhivopisi," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v trinadtsati tomakh* vol. 4 (M.: Gosudarstvennoe izd-vo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1957), 242, 245-246. In fact, however, Mayakovsky had singled out Fernand Léger, rather than Picasso, as the artist whom he liked best (ibid., 240, 248-249), and, of course, Mayakovsky's statements on Picasso were more complex and ambiguous than the 1960s critics presented (ibid., 237, 244, 249-250, 252). N. V. Reformatskaia, "Frantsuzskie khudozhniki i Maiakovskii," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 3 (1961): 249-51.

more generally, critics relied on the poet's name and clout. They interpreted Picasso's images in Mayakovsky's terms, excerpting his verses as explanations. They compared the artist and poet's contempt for the conventions of bourgeois society, identifying both as "artist-rebels" at a time when "rebel" still retained its commendable revolutionary connotations.[163] The late 1950s and early 1960s were a time when Mayakovsky's posthumous popularity was at its peak; when his new monument in the center of Moscow became a symbolic locus of creativity, youth, and protest; when literary scholars took up the subject with unparalleled enthusiasm, while "young poets" claimed his mentorship and mixed his poems with their own.[164] Many people writing about Picasso were originally trained as Mayakovsky scholars or had been profoundly affected by his poetry.[165]

The comparison was not merely an expedient justification. Mayakovsky provided a conceptual apparatus for understanding Picasso. In his study of the interactions between painting and poetry, the literary scholar Vladimir Al´fonsov confirmed aesthetic affinities between Mayakovsky and Picasso, tracing the poet's evolution through analogies with the visual (the early Mayakovsky as poet-painter) and the audible (the late Mayakovsky as poet-orator). In Al´fonsov's analysis, Mayakovsky and Picasso relate to the world through sight and communicate through complex associations, for the poet "activates" feelings with a visual realization of figurative speech taken literally. Both deform images to achieve maximum expressiveness. And both abandon "individualized narratives" for generalized, universalized images, such as *Guernica*, which Al´fonsov and others cited as a Mayakovskian painting.[166]

While critics viewed *Guernica* as a universal image of war, poetry plunged readers into the geographic specificity of the painting's title. Largely thanks to the Cuban Revolution, the early 1960s witnessed a revival of romantic fascination with Republican Spain, International Brigades, and Spanish culture in general.[167] Evgenii Evtushenko spearheaded the Spanish romance in his verses about

163. Golomshtok and Siniavskii, 37; Moldavskii, "O Pablo"; Nedoshivin, 21; Turbin, 6, 19, 45.

164. Liudmila Polikovskaia, *My predchuvstvie… predtecha… Ploshchad´ Maiakovskogo, 1958-1965* (M.: Zven´ia, 1997), 25-30, 39-42, 51, 102-103, 130, 143-145, 328-329.

165. The critics trained as Mayakovsky experts include Moldavskii and Reformatskaia; those who had experienced Mayakovsky's influence in their creative careers include: Savelii Grinberg (who spent much of his life not only writing futurist poems, but also working as a tour guide in the Mayakovsky Museum in Moscow), Voznesenskii, Iutkevich.

166. Vladimir Al´fonsov, *Slova i kraski: Ocherki iz istorii tvorcheskikh sviazei poetov i khudozhnikov* (M. & L.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1966), 91-174. The essays on Mayakovsky and Picasso were written in 1962, and, joining the polemic on the relationship between art and literature, endeavor to trace the impact of painting on poetry (rather than argue for the mutual independence of literature and painting.) In particular, Al´fonsov's essays are a response to Nina Dmitrieva, *Izobrazhenie i slovo* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1962). See also Reformatskaia, 250; on encountering Picasso through Mayakovsky see: "*Drugoe iskusstvo,*" vol. 1, 127.

167. Petr Vail´ and Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: mir sovetskogo cheloveka*, 2nd edition (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996), 52-60.

Barcelona and Toledo, the corrida, the death of Lorca and the lies of Franco.[168] He also wrote several poems about "Pablo's paintings," which, in Evtushenko's rendition, belonged to "the underground," to "grubby basements" and "young hands" smelling of "hectographs and dynamite." As underground fighters — those "real heirs of Picasso" — roll up the paintings and carry them off into "a world full of prisons and conspiracies," the canvases take on the appearance of rifles. Nearly twenty years later, Evtushenko still cherished the same imagery: upon *Guernica*'s return to Spain, he likened the canvas to a banner shot through with bullets.[169] To the existing representations of Picasso, he added the romantic image of a stoic Spaniard at clandestine gatherings.

Lorca and Picasso were exemplars for Andrei Voznesenskii, Mayakovsky's follower, and like Evtushenko, one of the most prominent young poets of the Thaw. In the 1950s, Picasso was "the idol" of Voznesenskii's student years at the Architecture Institute. In the early 1960s, he thought of Picasso as "a pagan god," likened him to Lorca (for his paintings were metaphorical like poetry), and publicly confessed, "You and I are not acquainted, but I love you, Pablo Picasso…" After they did become acquainted, Voznesenskii read his "I Am Goya" to Picasso, who "understood without translation."[170] And when Picasso died, another poet, Leonid Martynov, composed an elegy, "On the Death of Picasso" — a chronicle of natural cataclysms ("solar prominence" and "forest fires") that occur in response to the deaths of those "who had truly ascended" (*podlinno vozvysilis'*). In Martynov's poem, Picasso's kindred souls, whose deaths prompted natural disasters, were not artists but, significantly, writers. Both were Russian: Lermontov, the Byronic hero, and Gorky, the petrel of the Revolution.[171] Ultimately, when critics had to identify Picasso in one precise word, they called him a poet, and, with this title, conferred on the artist the highest praise possible in Russian culture.[172]

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168. Evgenii Evtushenko, "Korrida," "Monolog ispanskogo gida," "Kogda ubili Lorku," "Barselonskie ulochki," in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* vol. 2 (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1980), 77-87, 116-7, 132-35. "The lies of Franco" is my paraphrase of the title of Picasso's etching, *The Dream and Lie of Franco*.

169. Cited in Medvedenko, 8, 39; see also Evtushenko, "Golub´ v Sant´iago," in *Mama i neitronnaia bomba i drugie poemy* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1986), 138-84, esp. 156.

170. Voznesenskii, *Proraby*, 46, 209, 355-60 (on Lorca); Andrei Voznesenskii, "My — mai," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (1 May 1962); idem, *40 liricheskikh otstuplenii iz poemy Treugol´naia grusha* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1962), 43, 101; for Picasso's themes in Voznesenskii, see "Khudozhnik i model´," in *Vypusti ptitsu! Stikhi i poemy* (M.: Sovremennik, 1974), 61-62.

171. L. Martynov, "Na smert´ Pikasso," in *Dukh tvorchestva — stikhotvoreniia, poemy* (M.: Russkaia kniga, 2002), 342.

172. They did not have in mind Picasso's attempts to write poetry. Gaevskii, "Na vystavke," 88; Nedoshivin, "Pablo," 22; Moldavskii, "O Pablo," where *Guernica* is called a poem. For a deeply-felt articulation of this thesis — Picasso as a poet and his paintings as poetic metaphors — in later Soviet analysis, see Podoksik, *passim*, esp. 9, 22, 25, 27, 31, 39, 50, 55, 86.

A non-event, 1966

In 1966-1967, stories of personal encounters were welded to scholarly analyses in the first Soviet album of Picasso's art. The story was a version of Ehrenburg's memoirs and his 1956 article. The critical study explored Picasso's themes, colors, allegories, his "special aesthetic universe," in a way that left the reader with no doubt: "It is unquestionable; Picasso is a veritable artistic genius." Opening with Picasso's signature in Russian, the album was an instructional manual for reading artworks; every page contained four or five illustrations with explanations about the intended effects of lines, distortions, decorativeness, symbolic and historical references.[173] As such, the album summed up the decade's enlightenment efforts.

The occasion for the album was another Picasso exhibition held in Moscow and Leningrad in 1966, in celebration of his 85th birthday. This time the focus was on Picasso's graphics, with some of the familiar drawings, lithographs, and ceramics from private and museum collections in Russia, plus over a hundred prints from the Louise Leiris gallery. The pride of the exhibition was a selection of the *Vollard Suite* engravings with neoclassical figuration and subjects derived from classical mythology (the series *The Sculptor's Studio*, *The Minotaur*, and *The Blind Minotaur*). On display, too, were *The Painter and His Model* of 1954 and 1963-64 — the prints in which Picasso reassessed the problem of artistic creation. These, as well as *The Smoker* series presented distorted figures and faces, but the retrospective also included the 1954 classicist explorations of masquerade and voyeurism, *Dance with Banderillas* and *The Rehearsal*. The exhibition conveyed Picasso's dialogues with Cranach (*Venus and Amour*, *Bust of a Woman*) and Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*.[174] Unlike in 1956, there was press coverage, a catalogue, and an album. Much of this output was a discourse on genius, with the images developed in the preceding decade: Picasso as *homo ludens*, magician, child.[175] In homage, Soviet newspapers, including *Pravda*, printed telephone reportages from France, in which journalists told of the largest Picasso retrospective in Paris and popular festivities in Vallauris. These reports placed the Soviet Union in the community of Picasso admirers; "the entire mankind" celebrated the artist, and *Pravda* wished to leave nobody behind, reprinting a laudatory article in its provincial edition.[176]

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173. *Grafika Pikasso* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1967), 19-30; on ceramics, see I. Karetnikova, "Keramika Pikasso," *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR* 8 (1967): 28-30.

174. *Pablo Pikasso. Grafika — keramika. Vystavka iz galerei Luizy Leris v Parizhe i moskovskikh kollektsii* (M.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1966).

175. *Pablo Pikasso. Grafika — keramika*; N. Dmitrieva, "Vystavka rabot Pikasso v Moskve," *Sovetskaia kul´tura* (29 December 1966). This discourse, of course, was not particular to Soviet authors; child, devil, genius, hero, and poet were central to the Picasso myth in the West. [Carsten-Peter Warncke, *Pablo Picasso, 1881-1973*, (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1995), vol. 1, 9-15; ibid., vol. 2, 673, 676-78.]

176. Zhorzh Leon [Georges Leon], "Frantsiia chestvuet Pikasso," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (27 October 1966); Iu. Ponomarev, "V chest´ Pikasso," *Sovetskaia kul´tura* (27 October 1966) (quotation); B. Kotov, "Pablo Pikasso — 85 let," *Pravda* (25 October 1966); reprint B. Kotov,

Accordingly, viewers came to the 1966 exhibition with certain expectations not only about art in general but also about Picasso. If there is a single common thread in their responses, it is citations of his "great name" and "indisputable authority." And yet, the majority (almost 70% of comment writers) did dispute his authority — and not only his, for they responded as much to what they had read about Picasso as to what they saw at the exhibition.[177] For reader-viewers, the principal source of their expectations was Ehrenburg's publications; and it was Ehrenburg whom they confronted. In structure, hostile comments followed the logic of rebuff, starting with a restatement of the accepted position ("with all due respect to Picasso as a public figure"; "there is an illustrious signature"; "despite his universal recognition") and proceeding to its negation ("but none of this means that we should propagandize him here in Russia"). Many viewers challenged the status of the name itself. "Picasso," in the opinion of several friends, "does not deserve such enormous fame that surrounds his name all over the world." And most radically: "the name of the author and his deeds will be forgotten by posterity."[178] They had read about Picasso's politics, his fame, his genius, and much of their resentment came from frustrated expectations, from the feeling of having been cheated — again. "Is this Picasso?!" viewers repeatedly wrote.[179] "I came to the Picasso exhibition with great interest. And I am leaving with even greater disappointment. I don't know what the organizers of the exhibition wanted to show, but they clearly did not show us what we had respected in the artist," wrote one official. A student found the exhibition "offensive" for its "mediocrity," for the lack of something very "significant," something one would expect from Picasso, "a world-famous artist, intelligent, subtle."[180] Viewers who left negative comments frequently spoke of disenchantment, of the long-awaited and longed-for "meeting" with Picasso, of the respect and love that they had accorded the artist — a genius and a hero. "Contradictory feelings" vexed a teacher who admitted, "I love Picasso the genius, not the baffled fool."[181]

"Bol´shaia zhizn´ Pablo Pikasso," *Pravda* (26 October 1966, periferiinyi vypusk). So much did the Soviet authorities wish to belong to "the entire mankind" celebrating Picasso that the Hermitage administration was ecstatic when Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler presented the museum with 20 recent prints. The announcement described Picasso in no ambiguous terms: "surprising and astonishing in his findings," "refined," and simply "great." Iu. Rusakov, "Estampy Pikasso — dar g-n Kanveilera," *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ordena Lenina Ermitazha* XXX (L.: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1969), 84-85. Compare Gukovskii, "Vremennye vystavki," 15, and A. Izergina, "O vystavke Pablo Pikasso," *Leningradskaia pravda* (20 December 1956).

177. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 44, 82, 214ob, 282-83.

178. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 47, 58, 170, 99ob, 179ob, 263 (quotations); see also ibid., l. 45-45ob, 61ob, 99-99ob, 117, 129, 130-130ob, 137, 170, 210, 214ob, 246, 282-82ob; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2679, l. 15

179. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 50, 55, 176 (quotation).

180. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 27-27ob (quotation), 42-42ob, 99 (quotation); RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 16; on disappointment, see also ibid., l. 13.

181. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 45-45ob, 108-108ob, 112, 130, 137-37ob, 203 (quotation).

When people professed their love for Picasso, they meant his *Young Acrobat on a Ball* and, more generally, the paintings of the blue and rose periods in the Soviet museums.[182] *Young Acrobat on a Ball*, displayed at the Pushkin Museum since the mid-1950s, was one of the most frequently reproduced foreign paintings in popular press, art albums, and museum guidebooks.[183] Viewers, thus, had in mind *their* Picasso. An old teacher, with reservations about the present exhibition, still admired something of Picasso:

> An entire spectrum of colors is under his control. In some canvases, he achieves powerful expressiveness and depth by his special, distinctive means of painting. I know that his large paintings in the Pushkin Museum and in other museums prove that he is an exceptionally original artist.

Another visitor, outraged by the drawings, modified her verdict: "Some pictures at this exhibition are not so bad, but the best ones are in our museum."[184] The Pushkin Museum thus helped viewers to acclaim — to claim, as well — the familiar Picasso (the one who *had become* familiar in the course of the decade), while rejecting what appeared strange and threatening. The Romantic concept of the museum as a temple persisted and helped viewers to distinguish the alien and dangerous from the familiar "our."[185]

The viewers who welcomed the exhibition likewise found the pictures "incomprehensible, […] unusual, strange."[186] Yet, their self-referential vocabulary

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182. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 50; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 2679, l. 35ob; on the centrality of *Young Acrobat on a Ball* to the reception and understanding of Picasso in the Soviet Union, see Aleksandr Gitovich, "Pikasso," in *Stikhotvoreniia* (L.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982), 176-80.

183. Golomshtok and Siniavskii, 29; Kataev, "Khudozhnik"; Prokof'ev, "Pikasso"; *Gosudarstvennyi muzei izobrazitel´nykh iskusstv im. A. S. Pushkina. Zapadnoevropeiskaia zhivopis'* (M.: Izd-vo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva, 1962), no. 48; *Zapadnoevropeiskaia*, nos. 112-114; *Ot Mane do Pikasso: Frantsuzskaia zhivopis´ vtoroi poloviny XIX-XX veka v Gosudarstvennom muzee izobrazitel´nykh iskusstv im. A. S. Pushkina* (M.: Izobrazitel´noe iskusstvo, 1974), nos. 86-92. In general, until the mid-late 1960s, Soviet guidebooks and albums usually reproduced the same several paintings of the blue and rose periods. Compare the early 1950s albums, which stopped with Corot and Millet [*Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1952)], the 1956 albums, which included the impressionists but not yet Picasso, although, in Leningrad at least, some of his paintings were already on permanent display [*Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh* (M.: Gosudarstvennoe izd-vo izobrazitel´nogo iskusstva, 1956); Vakidin, 205]; and the mid-1960s albums, which published reproductions of Picasso's paintings, including *Dance of the Veils* [*Ermitazh* (L. & M.: Izd-vo Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1965)]. For a continued scholarly fascination with the early Picasso, already integrated into "the classics of Western art," see V. Prokof´ev, "Pikasso. Gody formirovaniia," in *Iz istorii klassicheskogo iskusstva Zapada. Sbornik statei* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1980), 177-219.

184. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 89, 201 (quotation), 218 (quotation).

185. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 12, 54, 89ob, 99-99ob, 112ob, 114, 127, 128-28ob, 138, 160, 201, 203, 205, 210, 223, 239, 261, 273.

186. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 68, 81, 84, 158, 232, 235, 236-236ob; RGALI f. 1204, op. 2, d. 3208, l. 16. The most apparent social fault-line is generational: none of the pensioners, but 74% of all "young people," those who identified themselves as students or their age as under 30, welcomed the Picasso exhibition. An analysis of the social composition of comment writers

was (or became) different. While this wide-ranging intellectual evolution is difficult to pinpoint chronologically and even more difficult to explain, by 1966, new words had appeared in the comments: in addition to "we," people now spoke of "the self" and "the soul," asserting its primacy over reason. They may not have understood the paintings, but "understanding everything was not necessary"; it was what happened to "the soul" that mattered.[187] They were willing to let Picasso into their world, or to take a precarious journey into his, as a musician did, traveling with him in time, "into a pagan age," and attributing the trip to her "craving for the otherworldly."[188] Another visitor interpreted his journey as a merging of two worlds (his own and the artist's) — a very personal experience underscored with repeated possessive pronouns of "the self":

> Picasso [is] a philosopher who seeks (not in the sense of art but in the sense of life) and reflects his vision of reality in his own way [sic: *po-svoemu*, *svoe*] […] Picasso asserts himself and announces himself [sic: *sebia…sebia*] […] and reverberates in my soul.[189]

Reverberated almost literally, for viewers described their visual experiences as audible: "everything is alive, it all rings," "the engravings are sonorous, ringing," and, particularly, "[in] *The Rehearsal* [one visitor] could hear the rhythmic music of the man with the tambourine — tam-tam-tam."[190]

Music, but not clamor — this is perhaps the most important difference between 1956 and 1966. The intense physical reaction of 1956, the scuffles and screaming, were gone. There were conversations, to be sure, and rather strong emotional reactions are evident in the comments, but there was no commotion, scandal, or outward display of passions.[191] Professional reassessment of the relationship between visual and literary properties prompted a search for non-verbal analogies, and increasingly in the 1960s, art scholars began to study the connections between painting and music.[192] This is not to suggest that non-specialists were versed in these discussions, but the analogy came readily to viewers as they tried to array their impressions in writing. The very act of comment writing may have encouraged the analogy with music, for viewers found themselves unable to recap

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(1955-1966) does not reveal a strong correlation between aesthetic preferences and education. The overwhelming majority of comment-writers had received higher education and belonged to the intelligentsia in the Soviet sense of educated professionals. Many of those who left negative comments were medical doctors, PhDs, professors, Academy of Sciences affiliates, etc. For a different view, see Reid, "In the Name," 692, 701, 715.

187. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 84, 86, 93 (quotation); RGALI f. 2926, op. 2, d. 148, l. 15.

188. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 1-2ob.

189. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 21, 71-71ob, 79; RGALI f. 2926, op. 2, d. 148, l. 15.

190. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 68, 80, 229.

191. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 165.

192. For example: V. V. Vanslov, *Izobrazitel´noe iskusstvo i muzyka. Ocherki* 2nd edition (L.: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1983), esp. 39-126. Music and Picasso: Vakidin, 227; Gosteleradiofond no. B-019657; Prokof´ev, "Pikasso."

the stories in the paintings; they could only articulate their own feelings, and some considered the experience liberating. Perhaps this was "true art, true painting" that spoke through "the language of colors" and "whose content [one] can't explain like [one] can't explain the content of a musical work." Perhaps not everything could and should be told; perhaps paintings were meant to be seen in silence — when words cease, language stops.[193] And so, by 1966, contemplative disposition returned to the museum, even at foreign art exhibitions. By this time, foreign exhibits of all kinds became a regular presence; meanwhile, political debate shifted to other, covert places. Moreover, in 1966 the audience consisted mostly of middle-aged viewers, whose serious, concentrated faces were captured in photographs and documentary sequences filmed at the exhibition.[194] Very few comments associated Picasso with youth, unhampered discussion, freedom, or revelation.[195] The 1966 exhibition never entered the lore of youth culture nor did it become a memoiristic myth.

Conclusion

The difference between the 1956 and 1966 exhibitions did not escape viewers. One visitor, for example, interpreted the calm of 1966, in contrast to the racket and physical outbursts in 1956, as a sign that "our viewers have already become habituated to this artist." Exasperated at the 1966 show, another recalled seeing much better paintings at an earlier Picasso exhibition.[196] What did not change from 1956 to 1966 were the classical ideals of beauty, the devotion to realism, the Romantic concept of the museum that presumed art to be an emotional and ennobling experience, and the attempts to protect the Soviet cultural space from foreign intrusion. What did change, however, was that, by 1966, the projection of politics onto art was less immediate. Gone was the confrontational stance and belligerent language with which generational and political identities were delineated in 1956. Gone, too, was the language of sincerity, the demands for open discussions and creative freedom. Viewers no longer thought of art exhibitions as revelatory experiences or opportunities to stage urgent debates. When the dissidents of the mid-1960s came out onto city squares, they had no plans to discuss art; they carried purely political slogans. Paintings became the objects of calm contemplation in quiet museums. A new sensibility gradually taking hold was marked by greater cultural tolerance.

193. RGALI f. 2458, op. 2, d. 1339, l. 129 (quotation), 130; ibid., d. 1344, l. 79; ibid., f. 2329, op. 4, d. 1406, l. 8ob, 9; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 306, l. 21, 101.

194. RGAKFD no. 1-24173; TsAADM photographs nos. 0-10527, 1-7208, 0-10523.

195. Truth/revelation — 3 comments (1%); freedom — 2 (0.8%); discussion — 3 (1%); youth — none. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 44, 75, 96ob, 147, 157, 172, 236ob, 256.

196. AGMII f. 5, op. 3, d. 365, l. 108ob, 165.

In the last thirty years of the Soviet Union, Picasso was exhibited periodically — in solo shows, in thematic expositions of modern painting or French art, and as part of permanent displays, but the 1956 exhibition overshadowed all subsequent ones.[197] It assumed legendary proportions already during the Thaw. The myth of the 1956 exhibition was largely of Ehrenburg's making: he recycled the text of his 1956 article in all later writings on Picasso; and, more importantly, on every occasion, in every public statement, he referred to the exhibition as a consequential *historic* event that defied and reversed the cultural trends of the previous 25 years.

During the opening ceremony, Ehrenburg felt that Picasso was right there, standing behind a curtain, and it would take only a hand's motion to reveal his presence.[198] He was not the only one who felt this way. In 1956 Picasso was everywhere — as an enigma, an icon, an analogy, and a cause. Picasso's presence was so palpable because it merged most immediately and memorably with student unrest, and, most organically and potently, with the nascent reevaluation of aesthetic values. For over two years (1954-1956), artists had publicly talked about "creative freedom" and the multiplicity of styles implicit in socialist realism. They had also practiced what they preached. Picasso came, therefore, to people who had expected him for over two years. He came at the beginning of a "generational conflict," inflaming it ever the more so. In political debates and at artists' congresses, in viewers' comments and post-Soviet memoirs, his name was welded to a generational language. Whatever the image — fashionable youngsters, bespectacled intellectuals, long-haired political firebrands, or just plain "students," whether in lecture halls, dormitories, clandestine meetings, or city squares, "Picasso" went hand-in-hand with attempts at generational differentiation. Student unrest and provocative discussions in the creative unions followed different courses of action and distinct chronologies, but in 1956 they converged. The pattern of discourse radicalization — from group-specific concerns into a general commentary on Soviet life — was common to both. Picasso's art was not the focus of student unrest and of grumbling in the creative unions, but he was a convenient and prominent metaphor for expressing far broader discontent and expectations. The arrests that followed had very little to do with Picasso, but they assured that the exhibition would be associated with martyrdom and that memoirists would see it as a turning point in their lives.

Picasso's fortunes in the Soviet Union differed from those of other foreign artists and exhibitions that arrived at the same time. Soviet viewers never comfortably domesticated modernist paintings displayed at Western art shows.[199] The least "translatable" of foreign artifacts, paintings generally were not

197. The next exhibition was held in 1971; AGMII f. 5, op. 3, dd. 438, 446.

198. Ehrenburg, *Ss* vol. 6, 552.

199. Ludmila E. Gaav and Marina V. Potapova, "New Audiences for New Art: the Public at the Avant-garde Exhibitions at the State Russian Museum," *Poetics* 24 (1996): 131-59, here 148-49, 155.

susceptible to mediation by Soviet authorities. And yet, Picasso was mediated for Russian audiences. Some of the most commanding voices in Soviet culture, old Francophiles and young romantics alike, "translated" him into Russian. They did so because he had meant so much in their lives. Picasso symbolized the style of neckties they wore and the tobacco they smoked, the books on their shelves and the portraits on their walls, their youth as they recalled or constructed it, and their romantic engagement both with the Revolution and with "Europe." Perhaps nowhere else, save for France, did Picasso become such a recurrent poetic presence — as a common noun, an adjective, a dedication, a companion of gods and poets. By the late 1960s, he was already a fact of literary life, with stories based on or titled after his paintings. In these stories, the protagonists of his blue and rose periods came alive, spoke, acted, traversed time and space, and turned up in Russia.[200] Thousands of people came to the exhibitions in Moscow and Leningrad, but as a literary phenomenon, Picasso reached many more people all over the country. He would also reappear as an illustrator of poetry in Soviet biographies of his friend Paul Éluard and in Soviet translations of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.[201] And to children of the 1970s and 1980s, Picasso came by way of Dmitrii Grigorovich: printed on the cover of his story "The Gutta-percha Boy" and bound to the sad fate of a Russian circus child, *Young Acrobat on a Ball* would take on a very different meaning. Painting, still and as always in Russia, was mediated through the literary Word.

"Picasso" became one of the key words in Thaw culture. Golomshtok and Siniavskii offered an apt formulation: "paintings-symbols," "paintings-concepts." In the Soviet society of the 1950s, Picasso was a symbol and a concept — on a par with the metaphor that gave this era its name.

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200. Or in Azerbaijan, as the case may be, because Picasso had outreached the Russian capitals. El´chin, "Poezd. Pikasso. Latur. 1968," in *Serebristyi furgon: rasskazy i povesti* (M.: Sovetskii pisatel´, 1978); see also Viktor Dragunskii, *Devochka na share* (M.: Detskaia literatura, 1964).

201. S. Velikovskii, *…K gorizontu vsekh liudei. Put´ Polia Eliuara* (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1968); Ovidii [Ovid], *Metamorfozy* (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1977).